

A D V I C E  
F R O M A  
L A D Y O F Q U A L I T Y ,  
T O H E R  
C H I L D R E N ;  
I N T H E L A S T S T A G E O F A  
L I N G E R I N G I L L N E S S .

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH,

*K*  
B Y  
S. GLASSE, D.D. F.R.S.  
CHAPLAIN IN ORDINARY TO HIS MAJESTY.

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T H E F O U R T H EDITION.

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M.DCC.LXXXVI.

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LONDON: 1785.  
BY  
JOHN HARRALD  
LONDON: 1785.





TO THE  
QUEEN.

*May it please your MAJESTY,*

THE ambitious desire of see-  
ing your MAJESTY's name  
prefixed to this little work may  
VOL. I. A perhaps

## DEDICATION.

perhaps in some degree be excused, on the following considerations : The first is, that this circumstance will immediately excite that prejudice in its favour, which there could be no hope of its receiving from the name of the translator : The other is, that, appearing under the patronage of your MAJESTY, its power of doing good will be considerably enlarged.

WHATEVER influence vanity may have on the former of these motives ; the latter cannot, I hope,

## DEDICATION.

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hope, be blamed. And if these pages should appear calculated to inculcate the principles, or to encourage the practice, of VIRTUE ; no other argument, I am confident, need be urged to induce your MAJESTY to suffer them to come forth under the sanction of your illustrious auspices.

A Lady of high rank, instructing her children in virtue and religion, and forming their tender minds to whatsoever may render them wise and good, seems, for very obvious reasons,

A 2                    parti-

## DEDICATION.

particularly entitled to your MAJESTY's gracious attention. But tho' the resemblance betwixt your MAJESTY, and the principal character before you, so far as her parental solicitude extends, is too striking to escape our notice; yet do we thankfully reflect, that in one respect a very essential difference may be observed: this lady, MADAM, employed only the uncertain intervals of sickness, and the anxious moments of an expiring life, in the discharge of that important duty, which is well known

to

## DEDICATION.

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to engage your MAJESTY's best hours of youth, and health, and vigour.

MAY your MAJESTY happily persevere in so good a work! to the edification of your amiable Offspring in every princely virtue—to the great delight of your loyal and affectionate subjects—to the furtherance of their Royal Highnesses' present and future happiness—and, above all, to the glory and praise of G O D!

SUCH is the prayer of thousands; and, among the rest, of  
A 3 one,

## DEDICATION.

one, who presumes to subscribe  
himself, with all imaginable  
duty and respect,

MADAM,  
Your MAJESTY's  
Most devoted,  
Most obedient, and  
Most humble Servant,

GREENFORD; Nov. 16, 1778. SAMUEL GLASSE.

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THE  
TRANSLATOR's PREFACE  
TO THE  
READER.

*IN one of Pope Ganganelli's letters, the following work is honourably mentioned, as being a complete treatise on Education. From the moment of my seeing it thus spoken of, I determined to examine its pretensions to so favourable a character. The pains it has cost me, to render it of general use to my countrymen, may be considered as the best proof of my opinion in this respect.*

*I can truly say, I have read the book with inexpressible delight: the involuntary tear has more than once been witness to my approbation of that tenderness of affection,*

A 4                      with

*with which it abounds. And the hours, which I have most agreeably, and I trust not unprofitably, passed in the society of this incomparable mother, have made me ample amends for the trouble I have taken, in endeavouring to do justice to the dignity of her sentiments, the warmth of her affection, and the pathetic energy of her expressions.*

*For myself, I claim no more merit from the following translation, than that which is due to a good intention. It is possible, that many may profit by these excellent instructions, who are unacquainted with the language in which they were written; and some even of those, who are acquainted with it, may yet read them with greater ease and benefit in their own tongue.*

*A close comparison with the original, I foresee, may be unfavourable to my reputation*

*as*

*as a translator ; but it cannot injure it, as an honest man. For, without adhering with too servile an attachment to my author, I have endeavoured to express the sentiments before me as exactly as possible, except only in a very few passages; where, for obvious reasons, it was necessary to give a different turn to the expressions of this excellent woman. In all other instances, I have cause to think meanly of myself, in proportion as I have departed from the original ; as nothing can be more pure, more instructive, or more affecting, than the genuine dictates of that heart, which gave utterance to these most interesting conferences.*

*If, upon the whole, the following work be read with candour, the translator has no doubt of the reader's indulgence : if otherwise, he has little to hope for, either with*

## TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

*with respect to the reader or himself. He that is desirous to profit by the instructions here presented to him will be more disposed to transcribe them into his own conduct, than to criticise on the precise terms in which they are conveyed.*

*There never was a period, in which such an address to the prevailing manners of the age was more necessary than the present. It will be a matter of unspeakable satisfaction to me, if the following pages should lay the least restraint on any of the sons or daughters of pleasure: and if, withdrawing their attention from the pursuit of a phantom, a bubble, and a toy, they should direct it to those objects, which religion recommends, which reason approves, and which virtue and good sense universally applaud and admire.*

S. G.

ADVER-

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## ADVERTISEMENT.

WE here present you with the pure effusions of parental tenderness: as filial affection preserved them from being lost, so a desire to promote the benefit of mankind has induced me to make them public.

THIS excellent woman having herself given us the history of her life in her first discourse, we shall only add, that she had every advantage of person and understanding; and that nothing can be more affecting, than that display of female delicacy and manly sense, which appears in these conferences with her children.

WE here see a mother, elevated as it were above herself, and insensible of the miseries of sickness, and the horrors of the grave; while she is inculcating in  
the

## ADVERTISEMENT.

the minds of her children the duties which they owe to GOD, to their country, and to society. Her discourse is chiefly directed to those two of her sons who had engaged in a military life ; in one of these conferences, she addresses herself particularly to her third son, who had dedicated himself to the church : another is confined to the instruction of her daughter. In all of them, her admonitions are inforsed with tears, and interrupted by sighs ; they are the natural dictates of the tenderest affection, which no bodily infirmities could prevail with her to suppress. If the reader finds not in this work those episodes, or that variety which distinguishes a romance, it is only because Truth wants none of these embellishments : she needs only to be seen, to command our attention and our admiration : the voice of nature is heard throughout the work, and the eloquence here displayed is the forcible language of the heart.

THE

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THE evening being made choice of as the properest season for instruction, we find the work divided into *Evening Conferences*. The whole was faithfully collected by the industry of an *Amanuensis*, so placed, as to be an ear-witness of all that passed: had not this care been taken, the world would have been deprived of an invaluable system of education, which no one can read with inattention, and few without improvement.

THE reader will at once perceive, that, tho' the expressions of our admirable instructress are divested of ornament and art, she was a person of superior abilities, and of great knowledge.

IT were a tribute justly due to the memory of such a lady, to transmit her name, with all the respect which is due to it, to posterity. But as her humility induced her to wish she might not be recorded after her death, we think ourselves obliged to do violence to our inclinations,

## ADVERTISEMENT.

clinations, in compliance with her last request.

NOR are we at all apprehensive, that this concealment will impeach the authenticity of the work : it is conceived in such terms, as to convince any judicious reader, that such sentiments could only be founded in nature. Here are no brilliant conceits, no affected phrases ; but the artless expressions of maternal affection : he who does not yield to the force of such evidence as this, must be considered as one, who cannot distinguish what is really the language of nature ; or as one who never yet experienced the power of sentimental affection.

PROBABILITY does not always go hand in hand with truth ; but they are happily united in this work. What indeed can be conceived more natural, than that a tender mother, anxious for her children's welfare, should take advantage of her gradually-declining health to set before them the vanities of the

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the world; and to give them the best directions for the regulation of their conduct? Let any man enter seriously into himself; let him listen to the language of his own heart: and he will soon find, that those noble sentiments, which occur in the following pages, could never have been the offspring of imagination. The life of this incomparable mother was but too short, as it did not exceed thirty-nine years; but she will yet live in these her genuine conferences, which, we doubt not, will be watered with the reader's tears.

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# A D V I C E

F R O M A

## L A D Y O F Q U A L I T Y

T O H E R

## C H I L D R E N.

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### C O N F E R E N C E I.

*The History of her own Life.*

THE very weak state of health, in which I have now been eighteen months, forbids me to hope for any long continuation of my life; I have determined therefore, my dear children, to call you together, as well to discharge my obligations, as to amuse my sufferings. By the loss of your father, my duties as a mother seem to be redoubled; I am called upon to supply to you the want of his excellent advice; and to labour to render

CONF. I.

B you

CONF. I. *you worthy inheritors of his glory and his  
virtues.*

You are not insensible of the obligations laid upon you, to shew mankind from what ancestors you derive your origin. Their history you are sufficiently acquainted with, to know *who* they were, and *how* they distinguished themselves: but perhaps their example may less sensibly affect your minds, than my advice. Especially if you consider, that it is your best friend, who is now conversing with you; one, whose instructions are the dictates of affection, and the result of a tender regard for your happiness. The only books, from which my precepts are drawn, are experience, a knowledge of the world, and the convictions of my own heart.

DESCENDED from a family not less distinguished by its misfortunes than its honours, I was left an orphan at ten years of age.

age. My education fell under the direction of my father's sister; whose inclination, as well as rank, drew her frequently to court. No time was lost, in furnishing me with masters of every kind. I soon became an object of attention; and my friends took care to announce me possessed of a considerable fortune. The world presented itself to my view in the most brilliant colours; and with singular delight I indulged the deception. A succession of amusements served to stifle reflection; and I seemed to live for no other purpose than to pursue my pleasures.

SOMETIMES my soul, not quite as yet debased, seemed desirous to soar above these enchanting trifles; but vanity and dissipation soon hurried me away, and effaced the impressions of reflection. How far from real happiness is a life of subjection to prevailing fashions; from which it has neither opportunity, nor resolution,

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to withdraw itself! In vain do we perceive the miseries, which intrude themselves amidst the pleasures of the world; in vain do we receive instructions, by which we might be both affected and improved: we still continue enslaved to our passions, and eagerly embrace the phantom of delusion. I resembled those travellers, who, knowing the right way, yet thinking to shorten their journey, turn aside from it, and are lost.

ALL, that were about me, conspired to fill my mind with false ideas; their language was that of flattery and deceit: they either concealed from me my faults, or they only corrected such as might serve to render me ridiculous. Scarce had I begun the day, when my attendants made it their busness to inspire me with a love of idleness and pleasure: one part of it was spent, in decorating my person with all the ornaments of dress; and the other,

in

in receiving the rewards of my unprofitable industry. I was admired, in proportion to my external appearance; and this admiration served only to feed my vanity.

I never shall forget, that, being one evening quite overcome with that satiety, which destroys the satisfaction of the votaries of pleasure, I opened by chance a volume of moral essays, a few pages of which filled my soul with confusion and remorse:

“ *Either, said I to myself, I am a dupe to the life which I now lead, or this writer is an egregious impostor.* ”

THESE reflections began to disquiet me; when I was informed, that it was time for me to go to a ball, to which I had been invited: my guardian, who took me with her in her coach, observed that I was unusually pensive; for which she seriously reproved me. Though she was in many respects an excellent woman, she was almost wholly engaged in the pursuit

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of amusements : she repeated her censures, when we entered the ball-room, in which every thing appeared truly magnificent ; the elegant taste of the D---fs of — had brought together persons of the most eminent rank, beauty, and accomplishments.

Too soon, the instruments of music, and the harmony of the voices, made me forget my Monitor, and all his reasoning : my heart, again seduced by pleasure, quickly persuaded me, that such austere morality was calculated only to fill us with melancholy : I danced with some degree of elegance, and the praises bestowed upon me were excessive ; in short, I returned home more enchanted than ever, with the world.

WE crossed the park, which a judicious distribution of lamps had so illuminated, as to give it almost the glare of noon-day. The crowd of people about us, the variety of faces and dresses, an unrestrained festivity,

vity, which every where prevailed, all served to seduce my soul with stronger delusions. We need no more than such a scene as this, to ruin our taste for ever. It fills the mind with a vast idea of the world and its pleasures ; and when once the heart has received these first impressions, it is next to impossible to efface them.

Six years passed away in a continual round of pleasure and diversions ; at the end of which, I was married to your much honoured father. Some circumstances, fortunate for me, gave *him* the preference in my regard to several young noblemen, who had professed the strongest attachment to me. Had any one of *these* succeeded in his addresses, I should have been wedded to folly and repentance ; it was my happier lot to be connected with discretion and politeness.

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We must needs appear with *eclat* on our marriage, and in this respect my natural turn of mind was of great service to me; it made me as splendid, as I was vain: and as our income was such as enabled me to indulge my taste for shew, I gave the reins to it without restraint. I kept a sort of court, in which I presided as a sovereign princess: my courtiers were lavish of their praises, they were suppliant for favours, and my husband and I were considered as beings superior to the rest of mankind in happiness and honours.

A war with the house of *Austria* deprived me of your father, for a time: he parted from me with that heroic spirit, which distinguished his character to the latest moment of his life; while in his absence I gave myself up to sorrow and regret. His letters, however, comforted me; and no sooner was my peace of mind restored, than my taste for pleasure returned.

turned. The opera of *Thetis* was performed, at which I was present ; and then it was, that my fondness for public diversions resumed its dominion in my heart. I now put myself forward to sit in judgment on every new theatrical performance ; and was the first to admire the decorations of the stage. The world is like a troubled sea, whose waves always carry us away much farther than we at first intended to go.

HOWEVER, notwithstanding my allowed taste for whatever might gratify the senses, or encourage vanity ; I was generally considered as a pattern of prudence and discretion : people were astonished to see a young woman, only twenty years old, with no other passion than a love for dress, and shew, and diversions. The world cannot conceive it possible, that while we are gliding down the stream of luxury and pleasure,

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pleasure, we are, in the eye of reason, objects of pity.

THE hints, which I had received from my friendly Monitor, whose writings I had only cursorily dipt into, were perpetually obtruding themselves; but, like those gentle breezes, which ruffle the surface of the waters, they only served to glance upon my heart. What surprized me was, that a very discreet relation of mine, to whom I had mentioned this author, strictly forbade my looking into it. But this she did, as she many years afterwards declared, merely to excite my eagerness to read it, and attach me more strongly to my book. She well knew, that prohibition serves only to stimulate; and that to interdict, is often the surest means of fixing our affections on that which is forbidden us. Her stratagem succeeded; I was never at rest, 'till I became possessed of

of these essays, and till I had read them again and again. His reflections gave me some uneasiness; but I was so far from being amended by them, that I only compared this emotion to the transient effect of a tragical representation on the stage. I was affected for a moment, and that was all.

AT length, your father returned from the war, covered with wounds and laurels. The compliments which were paid to him at court, and the honours which were heaped upon him, occasioned a second diversion of my thoughts, which plunged me deeper than ever in the gulph of dissipation.

MY first study was to be distinguished by the elegance of my entertainments; and in this I was very successful: my exquisite taste was generally admired, and every one expressed the highest satisfaction. What an encouragement was this to a woman, whose only ambition was to shine in  
her

CONF. I.

her sphere, to please and be applauded ! You will not wonder, that our expences were excessive ; and that, to support our vanity, we diminished our substance, and consequently your inheritance.

You see, my dear children, that I lay open to you, without reserve, all the circumstances of my life ; and that my language is that of one, whose heart dictates nothing but tenderness and sincerity. Where my conduct has been faulty ; you will, I am sure, be the first to forgive : it may, perhaps, prove a fortunate circumstance for *you*, that I, who have been first seduced into the ways of vanity and folly, am the better enabled to point out to you that path, which it will be your wisdom and happiness to pursue.

CERTAIN it is, that this abridgment of our fortune wrought some change in my manner of life : your father again left me in obedience to the orders of the court, which

which sent him into *Italy*; and I endeavoured to amuse myself in his absence by reading our best historians.

CONF. I.  
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THERE with delight I found the name, which you bear, mentioned with honour in the French and English history: there saw I those virtues displayed by your ancestors, which I hope it will be the study of your lives to imitate.

ABOUT this time, my friendship commenced with the Countess of S—, an excellent lady, of whom the hand of death has lately deprived the world; in which she seemed to live for no other purpose, than to do good. Her conversation charmed me; her prudence delighted me; there was no opportunity of instruction, which she did not improve; and this she did with so much ease and affability, and in a manner so natural and agreeable, that the most inconsiderate could not but attend to her: she often urged to me the necessity

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cessity of uniting in the same character the Philosopher and the Christian. Here I must acknowlege, not without taking shame to myself, that the pleasures of the world left me nothing more than a fruitless desire of being what I ought to be. It was continually interposing itself between the conviction of my judgement, and the propensities of my will, 'till my mind was utterly distracted : I would, and I would not ; and my existence was nothing more than a life perpetually interrupted with doubt and perplexity.

IN this strange situation did your father find me at his return. The King received him with that gracious air, which often serves instead of more substantial favours ; and which is in fact equivalent to a recompence. Every one partook of my joy ; and dragged me out, as it were in spite of myself, into the midst of pleasures and diversions. Paris and Versailles, each in

in its turn, beheld me wholly engaged in doing honour to my husband on account of his good fortune. Pleasure and ambition are cruel tyrants ; they leave us not a moment to ourselves ; and when they have filled us with hope, they almost always abandon us to disappointment.

YOUR father, though much engaged in the business of the world, had his intervals of solitude and retirement : he sometimes pleaded indisposition, that he might apply himself to the study of his profession : and, as I imagined, to amuse himself by a change of employment. He found, that the world has every thing that is good in it,---except true wisdom.

THE restless spirit of mankind renewed the war ; and again obliged me to live in a state of separation from a husband, who was dearer to me than myself. His valour, which rendered him insensible of danger, procured him, at the same time,

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time, the honour---of being grievously wounded, and of being made a Lieutenant-general. Joy and solicitude by turns took possession of my heart; and in this anxious state I continued, 'till I was fully assured of his perfect recovery.

THIS advancement of my husband revived my passion for the vanities of the world: I now again felt myself inclined to taste largely of the pleasures of the Court: I hired one house at *Versailles*, and another at *Fontainbleau*: and my taste for luxury, together with my natural vanity, led me to fit them up in the most expensive manner. I piqued myself on having more elegant furniture than any woman of my rank, and on having my table more sumptuously supplied. I became proverbial for the magnificence of my entertainments; and happy was the man, who could be present at them. Persons of fashion assembled at my house with eagerness;

ness; and each endeavoured to distinguish himself by the utmost exertion of pleasantry and humour.

I never found myself so far removed from wisdom, as when I was surrounded by the most celebrated wits: I heard nothing from them but fallies of mirth, which interrupted all serious thoughts; and such flighty conversation as served only to stifle reflection. Our decisions were peremptory on every subject, and were wholly influenced by fashion and by prejudice.

THUS was my mind entirely taken up in the pursuit of folly, instead of being employed, as it ought to have been, in attending to your education.

THE prevalence of an absurd custom had taught me, my dear children, that I ought not to have you with me more than a few days in a year; with which custom I could not comply, without doing violence

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lence to my tenderness and affection for you. Instead of endeavouring to inform myself what school was under the best and wisest regulation, my enquiry was, which was the most genteel; and I was much more desirous, that you should form honourable connections, than that you should receive good instructions: thus did I secretly encourage your vanity, while your improvement ought to have been my principal care. When we cannot amend our faults, the least we can do is to acknowlege them: and do not think that I offer any violence to myself in thus confessing my folly, and indiscretion: it is my greatest comfort, that I am giving you this surest evidence of my repentance. If my affection for you were less than it is, I should speak to you with less sincerity; it is the compunction I feel, for having listened more attentively to the voice of custom than to that of my duty,

which

which extorts from me this undisguised confession of my misconduct: in short, my extreme solicitude for you banishes every selfish consideration from my mind.

THE conduct of your father distinguished him now more than ever: he was deservedly esteemed a most accomplished soldier; insomuch that I dare venture to assert, without fearing the imputation of partiality or ostentation, that the dignity of Field-Marshal to which he was advanced, was no more than a distinction due to his superior merit as an officer. He saw himself elevated to the highest point of honour in his profession, at a time of life, wherein he was very capable of enjoying the fruits of his promotion; being at that time not fifty years old.

I was too fond of gaiety and pleasure, not to surpass on this occasion all my for-

CONF. I.

mer instances of luxury and expence: balls, illuminations, and entertainments of every kind conspired to celebrate that happy event, which filled my heart with joy; and nothing was now to be seen around me, but trophies erected to my vanity: I was wholly taken up in going from one circle to another, eager to receive congratulation and applause from every quarter. But how inconstant is all earthly glory! alas! your father died within three years after his promotion to the honour of a Marshal: and my heart, overpowered by this dreadful stroke, seemed to go down with him even into the grave: he died like a Christian philosopher; full of loyalty to his King, full of tenderness for his wife and children; burning with a fervent desire to be admitted into the presence of God; and only concerned, that it was not his good fortune to fall in the field of battle:

He

He would have been better pleased, had his last breath been drawn in the service of his country, and had he been permitted to make compensation with his life, for the honours which his Sovereign had heaped upon him.

THE first year of my widowhood was wholly given up to the effusions of grief; to an utter disrelish for every kind of satisfaction, and to an entire indifference about myself and every thing around me. I thought of nothing, but a most affectionate husband, who was now no more; and this sad idea served only to fill my soul with the most melancholy reflections.

I could then have readily answered for myself, that the world would never more take possession of my heart; but the world is not content with being a master only; it is a *tyrant*, which holds its vassals in fetters of iron; from which in vain I endeavoured to release myself; my former

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habits resumed their empire in my heart ;  
and tho' I did not forget my husband, I  
forgat all my resolutions. I now ap-  
peared a fashionable widow, wholly taken  
up by the pleasures of this world, and  
all its vanities. My greatest comfort in  
this moment of reflection is, that I never  
could be prevailed with to listen to any  
proposals of a second marriage : I had  
too much respect for the memory of your  
father, ever to consent to lose his name ;  
and I had too much regard for you his  
children, ever to endanger your welfare  
and happiness by such a step. This dou-  
ble attachment was superior to every other  
consideration ; I felt myself altogether de-  
voted to my children, who I feared might  
be less the objects of my attention, if I  
transferred my affections to any other :  
this single circumstance was sufficient  
to determine me. Heaven grant, that  
you may make me the best return for this  
sacrifice

sacrifice, not merely by your thanks, but by the tenderest regard for my happiness. I have no other wish, than to excite your affection; and as I am truly sensible of the full extent of my own, no one surely can blame me for earnestly desiring that our love for each other should be reciprocal.

WERE I so unhappy as to discover in either of you an abatement of affection towards me, I should remind you, that there is not one of you, whose birth was not almost the occasion of my death; and that the more I suffered in bringing you into the world, the more closely is my heart attached to you: This only knows to what degree you have hitherto engaged its affections; this only can testify, that amidst the dissipations of a life of pleasure, I never felt any *real* satisfaction but in seeing you thus sitting round me: happy moment! the only one which

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can afford me a gleam of consolation for a loss, which I can never cease to lament.

BUT to return to the world; which continually enslaved my affections, and which, whilst I was engaged in the gratification of my passion for pleasure, suffered me not to rest, day or night. I had sacrificed to it the best moments of my life; the hours destined to calm repose were devoted to it; and on the return of every day, fresh snares were laid for me; and new temptations offered to engage me in its service. I found myself absolutely subject to its caprice; I was present at every public assembly; I had a high opinion of its extravagancies; I studied all its refinements; I commended only what the world approved; I rejected only what the world condemned; I was, in short, as much a slave to its commands,

commands, as one who has no power to move or act, without the permission of his master.

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SOMETIMES, quite wearied with its importunity, I wished to shake off the yoke; and to enter into a serious examination of my heart; of which it had too long maintained the entire disposal; but such transient inclinations only served to convince me of my weakness. This sufficiently appeared, when, after some days of strict retirement, which should have been the commencement of a new life, a slight invitation called me forth again, to put myself under the power of my tyrant, and made me foolishly repent of having ever wished to withdraw myself from his dominion.

IN the mean time I began to perceive that the spring of my life was passed and gone, and that it was time to break the charm, which thus seduced me: however

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ever, the lot was cast, and rather than have recourse to reason, I employed every artifice to supply the deficiency of blooming youth. Thus did I at once endeavour to impose on others and delude myself; and nothing but the astonishing incident which I am going to relate, was capable of overcoming this dangerous illusion.

HAVING been informed that a new play was to be acted, I engaged to go with a party of friends to the theatre, and among the rest with Lady —, whom I loved with the tenderest affection: at the appointed hour, I called at the door of my friend: surprized, at my arrival, not to find any of the servants ready to receive me, I immediately ran up into her bed-chamber; I went to her, and saluting her, I asked her the reason why she was not ready to go with me: Oh! Heaven! She was dead: her coun-

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tenance still retained its beauty ; her flesh was yet warm, but her body was motionless and lifeless. Having shrieked so loud as to fill the whole house with my cries, I fell into a swoon, which lasted above an hour and a half. The domestics, who in their consternation had fled different ways, re-assembled at the noise of my cries ; and used every possible endeavour to bring me to my senses. After which, they informed me, that their mistress was just dead of a quinsey, that had choked her. Conceive, if you can, the horrors of my situation ; I was almost suffocated with grief, which laboured to express itself ; and in the utmost terror and amazement, I withdrew from this scene.

CONTR. I.

By this method it seemed that Heaven thought fit to act upon my mind ; to dissipate imposture and delusion. I returned to my house, wherein I saw nothing but emblems of pride and vanity. I now discovered

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covered for the first time, that those specious charms, with which the world had so long deceived me, were in reality no better than splendid miseries. I now reflected, that I had been only a dupe to my own pride, and the fashions of the world: that I had been running after a phantom of happiness, which had escaped me; that human life was most uncertain in its tenure; in short, that my essayist, who had distressed me, had told me the truth; and that one must be absolutely blind, not to see the force of his arguments.

As I had learnt from experience to distrust my own weakness, I felt no inclination to make a public profession of my change of sentiments; especially, as I knew that it is not easy to support a consistency of character in extremes; that too great zeal is seldom lasting, and almost always indiscreet; and that to discharge

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the duties of Christianity, it was sufficient to be—a Christian.

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HOWEVER, I insensibly withdrew myself from the world and its pleasures; and under a pretence of taking care of my health, as my constitution had been always delicate, I began with living very much alone, and no more mixing in large companies. I was considered as an invalid; and after a few censures from my acquaintance, the world as easily resigned me, as it had formerly solicited me. There is nothing sooner forgotten, than a person, who wishes to be so: one's retirement from the world may afford a topic of conversation for a day, and to-morrow nothing more is said about us.

My solitude being neither the affectation of singularity, nor the effect of ill humour, but the result of serious reflection; I continued to discharge the duties which I owed to society; I made my appearance

CONF. I. pearance at court, when it was thought necessary; I visited my acquaintance, when civility required it: I paid that attention to the duties of my station, which it appeared to demand; and I laid it down as a maxim, only to abstain from such things, as religion and reason forbade.

VERY soon the pleasure of reading serious books, and of studying myself, convinced me, that true happiness consists in conformity to truth; and that they, who give themselves up to a life of dissipation, have in reality nothing more than the shadow of happiness.

THAT horrible spectacle before-mentioned continually presented itself to my mind. I never can forget, that, whilst I fancied I was embracing a living friend, I held in my arms only a lifeless corpse, on which God himself had already passed an irrevocable sentence! At midnight the image of my friend very frequently appeared

peared to my disturbed imagination; whom I had been wishing to drag to the theatre, while heaven was pronouneing an irrever-sible decree either of life or death ever-lasting.

CONF. I.

THIS it was, my children, which opened my eyes to a sight of my duty; this it was, which determined me to cul-tivate and improve your good dispositions, and to sow in your hearts the seeds of virtue and religion.

MAY heaven bless and prosper my de-sign! Indeed it is with the greatest satis-faction I observe, that your sentiments appear to be such, as seem likely to do honour to the memory of your father; and that you want nothing but a little more knowlege and information, and a little more inclination to attain it. It is with a de-sign to assist you herein, that I have de-termined to call you together every even-ing, when my health will permit; and

to

CONF. I. to discourse with you on some of the most interesting subjects. Having now given you the history of my own life, I shall henceforth concern myself only about your's; and shall endeavour to furnish you with the best instructions in my power, that you may become acceptable to your GOD, useful to your Country, and worthy of the King whom you have the honour to serve.

C O N-

C O N F E R E N C E II.

O n O R D E R.

**I**N vain, my dear children, do my physicians flatter me on the subject of my health. I perceive myself hastily declining ; and am apprehensive, that if I any longer deferred to guard you against the rocks and shoals which you may meet with in your passage through the world, whether from the tyranny of custom, or from the violence of your own passions, I might never be able to discharge that duty, to which my own affection for you, and the dying request of your father so powerfully excite me. His last words still sounding in my ear, as if they had been uttered by a voice from heaven, dwelt only on this great subject : the recollection fills my soul

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with

CONF. II. with an inexpressible mixture of tenderness  
and grief.

ALAS ! our united tears will never be sufficient to deplore our loss : those, which I see you shed at this time, are the strongest assurance that you inherit his generous sentiments, and it is the only pleasure which at present I feel myself capable of enjoying.

YOUR excellent father, just before his death, taking me by the hand, expressed himself nearly in the following words ; *Let your first care, I most earnestly entreat you, be the education of my children : be yourself their principal instructor ; and fail not to inculcate with all imaginable earnestness this great truth, that they are born for no other purpose, than to consecrate their lives to the service of their GOD and their King ; and that they will then only do honour to the memory of their father, when they faithfully discharge this two-fold Duty.* You cannot

cannot conceive, my dear children, with what heart-felt distress I recall to my mind this last most affecting scene ; it pierces my soul with the liveliest sensations of grief. But my solicitude for your welfare gets the better of every other consideration ; and I had rather tear open my wounds afresh, than conceal from you a circumstance, which cannot but affect you in the strongest manner. I have always kept it treasured up in my breast, as a valuable deposit ; which I intended some time or other to produce, whenever you should be enabled to judge of its value and importance.

I call heaven to witness, that neither business nor pleasure has ever been able to efface the remembrance of your father ; on the contrary, he is always present to my mind ; and indeed it is this lively representation of him, which alone enables me to support his loss. Without this

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CONF. II. [decorative bracket] painful resource, my mind would have absolutely sunk beneath the burthen of my grief.

BUT now the hour approaches, when I shall be re-united to the tenderest of husbands; when our ashes mixed together shall teach you, my dear children, the instability of every earthly possession, and the wisdom of despising the momentary vanities of life, when brought into comparison with the treasures of an immortal state. It is by such reflections as these, that order and regularity are best preserved in our minds; and that we are taught the necessity of doing nothing contrary to the rules of prudence and discretion.

THIS practice is so essential to our happiness, and so conformable to the designs of our Creator, that it cannot be neglected without a violation of the laws of GOD. It is this regard to duty and propriety

propriety, by which peace is preserved in kingdoms, and union in families: it is this which regulates the conduct of the servant towards his master, and the subject towards his prince; it is this which engages my love towards you, and your respect towards me: it is this which makes *you* studious to mitigate my sorrows, and *me* incessantly solicitous to advance your happiness.

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IT is this regularity of conduct, which makes us good parents, good friends, and good citizens; which gives us a right judgment of things, and assists us both in the choice of the fittest time and the properest method of doing whatever is to be done. It is one of the greatest misfortunes in the world, to live without any stated rule of conduct, in perpetual disorder and confusion. Our life should be a transcript of the harmony of the universe; which could not subsist, much less attract our ad-

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miration, were it not for that just proportion, which is discoverable in all its parts. Take away order from the world, and you reduce it to a frightful chaos: leave man without any other guide than his own passions and caprice; and there will be nothing but perpetual discord betwixt his judgment and his will.

RUIN ensues, when a man exhibits in his own ill-governed mind the miseries of anarchy: his ideas are confused; his imagination is bewildered; his conscience is misled; his reason is obscured; and his soul becomes the seat of confusion and irregularity.

IF you do not accustom yourselves, at your first setting out in life, to lay down some regular plan of conduct, you will never attain to that rectitude of judgment, which estimates things according to their worth; and which, in the midst of errors and

and prejudices, will enable you to give CONF. II. the preference to truth.

YOUR father's inclinations were so wisely regulated, that his behaviour was always influenced by a strict regard to propriety : he knew, with the philosopher, that we ought to weigh the motives of our conduct, and every evening to enter into an examination of our actions.

THE man, who lives at random, is a slave to his own whims and caprice. The world reprobates such an one, as a monster which disturbs its harmony ; and society rejects him, as a being incapable of friendship. We see, in short, that, whoever is thus irregular in his own mind, is destitute of every quality, which can contribute to the ornament or benefit of human life : his manners are disgusting, his expences are excessive, and his whole conduct unaccountable.

Do not think, that I am carried away by my imagination beyond the truth ; which

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I shall always strictly observe in conversing with you. The too sad experience of many confirms what I say; and it may serve to teach you, that it is impossible rightly to manage your affairs, or discharge your duty, without a proper command of your mind and passions: every movement of which should be as nicely regulated, as those of a well finished clock.

THE exact proportion observable in every work of GOD is intended to teach us, that order is the greatest beauty in nature; and that to despise this, is to counteract one of the great laws of the Creator of the Universe. Endeavour then, I beseech you, to imitate in your behaviour that general harmony in the creation; which, in the course of every year, supplies us with whatever is either agreeable or useful: let your studies be methodical, all conducted rather with a view to instruction, than mere amusement. If you

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read without a plan, you will overload your memory without improving it; and your knowlege will be little better than an undigested chaos.

THE mind in which disorder prevails, is, in the eye of reason, like a city without government, or a house without unanimity. But a person of this disposition deceives himself; and fancies, that if he keeps clear of those irregularities, which are offensive to society, he may make himself easy, tho' he has all the reason in the world to be dissatisfied with his way of life.

You will find many, who seem to delight in nothing but irregularity; who go to rest, when others rise; who eat, when others fast; who stay at home, when others go to church; in short, whose chief employment seems to be, to break thro' every rule, without the least regard to method in any part of their conduct.

ALAS!

## CONF. II.

ALAS! when I was one of these fashionable ladies, whose gaiety was an object of envy, I confounded night with day; I knew no law but my own whim; I had no time but for pleasure, no plan but to avoid every thing that was like regularity.

Be assured, that there is nothing so bewildered, as the life of a person, given up to the hurry and tumult of the world: such a one has no sense of the value of time; she knows no distinction of days, and pays no regard to duty; she studies fashions, is wholly taken up with trifles; she delights in that which debases the mind, and is contrary to reason; she is perpetually seeking happiness where it is not to be found; and, tho' wearied with the pursuit, renews it every day.

THE world is full of persons always engaged in new projects, and distracted with new desires; who die without reflection,

flection, because they have lived without CONF. II. any knowlege of themselves. When the mind is thus disordered, it is afraid to look into itself; or if it ventures to examine things at all, it only does it superficially. The senses are so many tyrants, from whose power we are unable to deliver ourselves; and nothing appears really valuable, which does not administer to their gratification.

Maintain then the dominion over your own minds, that you be not overcome by those passions, which will lay siege to your virtue; your thoughts will then be regulated by wisdom, and you will be raised above those clouds, which obscure the light of the understanding. Each of us may be considered as an epitome of the world, which is subject to eclipses, changes of weather, to storms and tempests. We all observe the strange revolutions, which happen in the universe;

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CONF. II. but as Providence, in the midst of such a multitude of created beings, preserves the utmost harmony both in Heaven and Earth, so ought reason to preserve in the human mind the strictest attention to order and peace. Without this we degrade ourselves below the meanest insect, or even the inanimate parts of the creation; which only subsist, to answer the purposes for which they were made. Behold the bee, or the ant; a thousand times wiser each of them, than the man who despises them. These never deviate from the laws of their nature, nor from the course which Providence has assigned them: it is only by an imitation of their conduct and foresight, that families are maintained, and kingdoms preserve their power and splendor.

THIS may serve to convince you, that whatever state of life you are placed in, it will always be full of disquiet, if your judgment

judgment and your passions are at variance with each other: you must therefore frequently examine into the springs and motives of your conduct, in order to regulate your affections. You will then see, as in a picture, the tendency of your actions; and will soon be enabled to rectify whatever is amiss in you.

WHEN a house is on fire, with what eagerness do we hasten to put it out! And shall we suffer our passions with fury to burn within us, without giving ourselves the least trouble to extinguish the flame? We seldom reflect that the mind is a kingdom, which cannot be well governed, without a constant care as well to defend it from its enemies, as to promote whatever may tend to the establishment of peace and tranquillity. Consider the stars, which shine in their courses over our heads; consider the elements, which are the source of life and

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respiration : what useful monitors are these to man, to be always ready like them to execute the commands of God ! This view of the creation perpetually reminds us, that every rational creature also ought to move in his proper sphere, and discharge his appointed duty. When we only act as we are influenced by a capricious humour, we insult the wisdom of a God of order, and raise a perpetual tumult in our own breasts.

I have always observed, that persons of a dissipated turn are as much disordered with respect to their affairs, as they are unsettled in their own minds ; and leave no inheritance to their children, but debts and law-suits. There is an easy kind of arithmetic, which every lover of method is acquainted with ; and which consists in computing our obligations and our necessities, with our ability to answer both, in order to keep ourselves within due

due bounds, and to pay a proper regard to that which may reasonably be expected from us. If you have not this love of method, which I wish to recommend, you will never be able to regulate your actions, or your families, or your own minds. You will either behave with too great haughtiness, or with too great familiarity, towards your domestics; you will not distinguish what is superfluous from what is necessary; and for want of calculation, you will have nothing but creditors, or debtors who have nothing to pay.

You are born, my children, to a considerable fortune; but what will become of it, if its use be not regulated by economy? Riches are absolute ruin to a dissipated owner: the same confusion which distracts his mind, produces an inconsistency in all his actions; one while, you see an astonishing prodigality, at

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another time you are shocked with as unreasonable avarice. He can throw away money, but he cannot give it: he sacrifices every thing to pleasure or to pride, but nothing to justice or chastity.

WHEN you are confirmed in this wise habit of acting methodically, every part of your conduct will be happily adjusted: you will set apart proper seasons for study and for recreation; you will manage your time and your income with prudence; you will distribute exact justice to your neighbours, and you will never engage in any important enterprize, without *considering the end*. Nothing will ever make you forget the duties which you owe to your character and station; no day will pass, in which you will not remember your duty to GOD. We never lose sight of these duties, but when we give the preference to a life of irregularity; when we go on without a single

single thought what we are, and what will become of us : hence it is, that the affections of disorderly persons differ very little from the propensities of the brute creation.

YOUR good dispositions encourage me to hope that my advice will sink deep into your hearts. Remember always, that it is the counsel of a mother, who would gladly sacrifice her life to purchase your happiness ; and of a friend, whose heart is bound up with your's, and who would not wish to live a moment, but in the most intimate connection with you. All the faults of my life have been offences against *order*, which can never be absolutely neglected, without frustrating the end of our creation : for GOD hath doubtless made us for this purpose, that we might moderate our desires, and keep our passions within proper bounds.

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BUT if your intentions are good, as I trust they are, enough has been said on this subject; besides, my want of strength reminds me, that it is time to relieve myself, and dismiss you for the present.

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C O N F E R E N C E III.

*On true PATRIOTISM.*

I DESIGN that the duties, which you CONF. III. owe your country, shall be the subject of this day's instructions; but as this is above my ability properly to handle, your father shall speak instead of me. A little before his death, he left me these reflections; desiring me to communicate them to you, when you were of a proper age to receive benefit from them. Read them, therefore; and let us listen to them with great attention.

THE eldest son received the manuscript from his mother, and thus began:—

“ P R O V I D E N C E, which directs the place of our birth, as well as every other circumstance of it, has ordained, that the

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CONF. III.

country in which we were born, should be dearer to us than any other; and that we may not have the least doubt of the truth of it, this sentiment is so universally impressed on our minds, that there is not a man upon earth, who is not naturally *a patriot*. The whole world may be considered as one great family; but the alliance is much stricter betwixt those who serve the same master, and are subject to the same laws. They have all one common interest; good and evil are indiscriminately dispensed; and each partakes more or less of the prosperity or misfortunes of the state.

" THOUGH you owe the tenderest affection to your mother, you must never forget that much is also due to the country which gave you birth; and which considers you as its children, and its subjects: you must divide betwixt them those sentiments of love and respect, which na-

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ture has implanted in your hearts. Nay, CONF. III.  
I will venture to say, however jealous I may  
be of my rights, as your father, that you  
ought not to hesitate, in a case of necessity,  
whether you should leave me or not, when  
your country demands your assistance.  
Then it is, that, with the heroic self-de-  
nial of a Roman, you must sacrifice every  
other consideration, and postpone every  
other interest to the duty which you owe  
to your King and Country.

" THE first character you sustained,  
was that of citizens : the state then re-  
cognized you as subjects, intimately con-  
nected with it. Religion adopts the same  
language with reason : she will teach you  
that your industry and abilities ought to  
be united in the service of your country ;  
and that it is an absolute robbery to deprive  
her of this assistance. She has a right to  
demand an account of our engagements,  
and to expect the application of our ta-

**C**ONF. III. lends to her advantage. They, therefore, who only employ themselves in the gratification of their own vanity, or who lie down in a state of torpid indolence, can only be considered as burthens to the state; or as wasps, which come to devour the labour of the bees.

" We are much mistaken, if we imagine ourselves at liberty to engage in those studies and employments alone which are most pleasing to ourselves; the pursuits of one, who wishes to be called a patriot, ought to be directed only by the love of his country, and an earnest desire to promote her welfare. What would be the state of that kingdom, in which every one, being master of his own actions, should do just what he pleases; and employ all his powers of mind and body, only in the gratification of his own fancy? A cheerful submission to our governors, and a readiness to stand forth in our country's cause,

cause, give us the truest picture of a well ordered and happy government.

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" You, who are already engaged in the public service, ought to be more sensible of this than any others; you are invested with honours and advantages, only on condition that you be always ready to assist your country. Woe be to you, if ever ye forget, that the very blood which runs through your veins must be dedicated to *her*; that she has as much right to dispose of your life, as you have to dispose of your fortune; and that you are no longer worthy to live, than while you maintain the character of good subjects.

" HISTORY, sacred and prophane, is full of examples of persons, ready to sacrifice their lives for their country's good; even women, forgetting the weakness of their sex, have become heroines, when the public welfare demanded their assistance."

CONF. III.

— HERE the generous mother, carried beyond herself, in a kind of rapture, interrupted her son.

“ Indeed, my children, I firmly believe this female heroism to be very attainable. I myself actually feel resolution enough, notwithstanding my bodily infirmities, to carry me even to the mouth of a cannon ; and encourage you by my exhortations to choose an honourable death, if my duty rendered such a trial necessary : reason, in that case, would make me altogether regardless of myself. The consideration, that I had brought such worthy children into the world, would dry up my tears ; and render me rather an object of envy than of pity, in the sight of my sovereign and my country.” — But go on.

“ THE enjoyment of life is by no means equivalent to the honour of dying for our country : for life is but a shadow ; whereas the glory which accrues from such a death, is a light which survives the

the obscurity of time, and shines with everlasting brightness. You find that *Marcellus* and many other heroes are still remembered, as if they were but just dead ; they sacrificed their mortal part, that they might become immortal. The renown, which accompanied their last breath, seems to have perpetuated their duration ; and where is the man of sense and reflection, who woulldnot be glad to share their fate ?

“ IT is not enough, my children, to wear the livery of men of valour ; to live in a corps, whose examples encourage bravery : fortitude must be ingrafted in the heart ; and it must be so disinterested, as neither to be influenced by eye-witnesses, nor by the prospect of reward.

“ EXAMINE yourselves on this head ; and if your sensations unfortunately contradict your profession, take shame to yourselves, and know that you are no better than

CONF. III. than hypocrites, as to personal courage. It is the inward motive, not the outward appearance, which stamps a value upon actions; if in taking up arms we have more regard to our own interest, than to that of our Country, and if, under a pretence of defending the rights of our King and Country, we think only of enriching ourselves, we only wear the habit, without having any portion of the spirit of a soldier. Many indeed have been found acting only under the influence of avarice and pride, at the very time that they signalized themselves externally by the most specious conduct. But the true soldier desires no other recompence, than the pleasure of doing his duty; no other witness, than his own conscience; he is just as ready to die in a crowd, wherein he will be mixed with the multitude, as to fall, distinguished in a single combat.

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“ THIS confidence is the effect of religion ; which purifies the intentions, and influences the will, and is the school of true magnanimity : without the motives which religion offers, nothing is to be seen but the shadow of virtue. Whoever is actuated by self-interest, should take care to conceal the principle on which he is acting : for the world, corrupt as it is, is not yet accustomed to applaud those actions, which have no better principle than pride and covetousness.

“ You are descended from a line of ancestors, whom your country ranks in the number of her heroes ; their blood circulated in their veins for no other purpose, than that it might be ready to be shed, in order to oppose the mischiefs which the enemy devised against the state. With the price of their blood they purchased those honours which you inherit ; and of which you then only properly avail

CONF. III. avail yourselves, when you imitate their  
virtues. Nobility is lost in the eye of reason and integrity, when it only serves to encourage us in pride and luxury, and give us an air of arrogance and disdain.

" It is a certain indication of a weak and an ungenerous mind, to imagine that a title gives us a right to despise the rest of mankind, and to do whatever our passions may suggest to us. Nobility is at once both a recompence for past services done to our country, and an engagement, by which the party so distinguished binds himself to excel not less in the dignity of his sentiments, and the superiority of his virtues, than in his rank and situation in the world.

" You can never therefore properly reflect on your noble birth, without being touched with a sense of the duties which it requires of you. If your country gives you credit on account of your ancestors; you

you ought to exert yourselves to the utmost to discharge the debt, and do honour to their memory. From the first moment of your being, the world has expected that you should be as great as your progenitors, and it is your duty to answer these expectations: otherwise, the artisan or the labourer will surpass you in the eyes of your country; and your titles and honours will only serve to make you contemptible.

" THE present age is not so barbarous, as to be ignorant, that all men are naturally equal; that all ought equally to labour; and that, if some are by the favour of their country distinguished above others, it is only with a design to hold them up as patterns to the rest of mankind. It is right, that there should be, in every kingdom, persons particularly called upon to vindicate the rights of honour and virtue: when we would kindle

emulation

CONF. III. emulation in the minds of men, we must exhibit to them examples worthy of their imitation. What a ridiculous mistake then is it, to suppose that we only receive the title of nobility, as an encouragement to licentiousness and pride?

" It is not a little pleasing to find one's self, in the midst of so many different ranks and orders of men, particularly called upon to support the character of generosity and valour. This pleasure is certainly worth all the trouble of exposing ourselves to any dangers, difficulties, or inconveniences to which our profession may be liable. True greatness consists in being ready to resign our claim to that honour which we well deserve; and in generously resolving never to be wanting to our King and Country, whatever we may be exposed to, in the discharge of our duty. When you make your entrance on the theatre of the world, you must

must expect to be an eye-witness of the various scenes which it exhibits; and think, like MARCUS AURELIUS, that there is no part, however tragical, which you may not at one time or other be called upon to perform.

" THE more attentive you are to your duty, the more you will be exposed to invidious censure: but then it is that you must seek for comfort in your own mind. Only make a point of doing what you ought; and then, whatever injury you sustain, you will never be greatly disconcerted. For this also is a proof of real magnanimity, to be superior to all events; nay, in some cases, even to hazard our reputation, while we are doing what we are convinced is right. It was thus, that FABIUS conducted himself; never altering his measures, notwithstanding the murmurs occasioned by the slow caution with which he acted. It is by no means

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CONF. III.

impossible, that calumny and ingratitude should be the recompence of your services ; but this you will utterly disregard, whilst your conscience bears witness that you have discharged your duty ; virtue is equally superior both to the smiles, and to the frowns, of fortune.

THE reason why so many persons are found disaffected towards government, is, because their patriotism is really founded in ambition. They consider only themselves, while they pretend to have nothing in view but the public good : and the least disappointment of their hopes leads them to rail against the constitution, and determines them no longer to stand forth in the service of their country. May such sentiments as these never enter into your minds ! May the public welfare so engross your attention, as to make you regardless of your own ! No man can ever be esteemed poor, who can boast of the advantage

advantage of being serviceable to the nation, to which he belongs.

"OBSERVE with what resolution the common soldier rushes into the battle; who has no expectation of being distinguished by a triumph, or of enlarging his fortune by conquest: he has nothing to expect but death. Learn from him, that it is your duty to perform, whatever is required of you, with firmness; without considering what may be the consequence to yourself in particular.

"BUT to whatever advantage that person may appear, who is taught by his profession only to estimate his life by the pleasure of sacrificing it, whenever his duty calls upon him to do it; yet will the brightness of his glory be entirely sullied, if he be led to despise other ranks of men on the comparison. He ought to be told, that our country is a body, which hath equal need of all its members; all of

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CONTR. III. which co-operate in different ways for the general benefit. The strength of a kingdom would be very soon exhausted, if it could only be maintained by the sword. The ploughshare of the husbandman, and the instrument of the lowest mechanic, are the honourable means of serving their country; such persons cannot therefore be despised, without degrading humanity itself.

“ I am not here speaking of Magistrates, or Clergymen. You have no need to be told, that these functions (the one employed to preserve an intercourse betwixt heaven and earth, the other to maintain the peace and good of families) are sacred and venerable; and that it is a mark of ignorance or folly in either, to be insensible of their own dignity or utility. How many of both these orders of men spend their whole lives in the discharge of their respective duties! They die with less eclat, I allow, than he  
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who falls in the field of battle : but their death is so much more precious in the sight of God, as it continued almost during their whole life ; every moment of which was a kind of diminution of themselves, through the continual wasting of their health and vigour.

" THE generality of men, looking on persons of distinction, see nothing but what serves to flatter their vanity, and excite the envy of their inferiors. But these are only superfluities, with which a mind that is really great can never be affected : it is right that our country should have rewards to bestow, and it is natural for us to be pleased with receiving them ; but we then shew they are unworthily bestowed upon us, whenever we suffer them to minister to pride or luxury. Better were it to live in poverty and obscurity, than to apply our riches and honours to the purposes of vanity. The more favours

**CONF. III.** you have received from the hands of your country, the more ought you to study to be affable, modest, and industrious, in return for such distinctions: otherwise, you will expose her to the censures of the invidious, whose wisdom in distinguishing you, you are engaged to vindicate by an exemplary conduct.

“ O ! how few are there, who are sensible of these duties ! No sooner have men rendered any important service to their country, and received the rewards of such services, but they give themselves up to a dishonourable sloth, or to an excess of pleasure. They wish to make amends for the time, which they have passed in labour and fatigue ; without reflecting that the seasons of honourable toil are the happiest moments of our life ; and that eternity will be long enough for repose.”

HERE

HERE the pious mother, having made CONF. III.  
a sign to her son to stop, said with a weak  
voice —

“ IT is time for us to finish this lecture :  
a vast field for reflection here opens itself  
to your view, if you are capable of  
drawing those conclusions, which present  
themselves to the mind. The wisdom of  
your father, you see, enabled him to find  
means of instructing you, even after his  
death : for my part, who have not his  
understanding and knowlege, I have no-  
thing to offer you but tenderness and af-  
fection, (which indeed is so great, as to  
make me insensible of my sufferings;) that  
you may not be left a prey to ignorance  
and passion. However weak my abilities  
may be, and however limited my appre-  
hension of things, I shall continue to com-  
municate my thoughts to you on whatso-  
ever subject I think may be of use to any  
of you ; your father’s excellent instruc-

CONF. III. tions being chiefly confined to the military life. My earnest prayer is, that my strength may be spared so long, as to give me an opportunity of accomplishing my design : I shall then close my eyes, and resign myself into the hands of death, with as little reluctance, as I would retire to sleep."

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CONFERENCE IV.

On SOCIAL DUTIES.

HAVING by the help of your father's CONF. IV. invaluable manuscript instructed you in your duty to your country, I shall now proceed to those obligations which you owe to society. Affection supplies me with fresh spirits; and I willingly forget my own weakness, when your happiness is concerned. My physicians indeed would fain dissuade me from such exertions of myself; but their apprehensions only serve to quicken my zeal to discharge that office, which love and duty towards you inspire.

THOUGH young, you already know enough of the world, to be sensible that there are connections suited to every con-

F 4. dition

CONF. IV. dition of life. And that, to confound  
the distinction betwixt each of these,  
would be equally contrary to the rules of  
decency and discretion. In your choice  
of companions, regard must be paid to  
age, profession, and fortune. This dis-  
tinction is not the effect of scrupulous  
vanity, but the fruit of a wise discern-  
ment.

WHAT would you think of a man of  
quality, who should only associate with  
the vulgar? Would you not justly con-  
sider him, as a contemptible character,  
and as one who had forfeited the privi-  
leges of his birth and education? Provi-  
dence has appointed diversities of rank  
and condition, which we cannot confound  
without a violation of its laws: the cir-  
cumstances of your birth were intended  
to teach you, that you should connect  
yourself chiefly with persons of your own  
rank, or at least with those who distin-  
guish

guish themselves by the worthiness of their sentiments. A similitude of manners, and of inclinations, is the only sure foundation of friendship among men.

CONTR. IV.

SOCIAL intercourse is not an arbitrary commerce with each other, with which we are at liberty to dispense, *as we will*, and *when we will*: the several classes into which men are divided, are mutually bound to shew respect, and friendship, and good will to one another. If regard is paid to your rank, you must, on your part, honour your superiors: this distinction serves to maintain harmony in the world; and forms that interchange of true politeness, which cannot be too nicely preserved.

HE who is really well-bred, will shew respect to his instructors, complaisance to his equals and condescension to his inferiors: he will endeavour to accommodate himself to different characters and circumstances. You will never  
see

CONF. IV.

see such a one running from one company to another, to carry tales, to broach new opinions, or to slander persons behind their backs. Always obliging, always a friend to truth, he well knows how to reconcile his language with his heart; and never says a word, which is inconsistent with decency or politeness. He is utterly unacquainted with the art of setting off himself at the expence of another: if he chuses to indulge a vein of humour, it is only in ridiculing the follies of the age, without any personal reflections; if he chuses to moralize, it is in so pleasing a manner, that at once he both delights and persuades.

THE safety as well as enjoyment of society would be at an end, if every libertine might freely utter his obscenities, and every atheist his blasphemies; but good manners are a security against such offensive discourse: and even the most abandoned

abandoned is obliged, in spite of himself, to conceal his vices, and assume the appearance of virtue. It is only in particular companies, equally reprobated by decency and good sense, that we are insulted by filthy jests ; and the palm of wit is assigned to those, who ridicule religion and its ministers : such company as this you ought never to be made acquainted with ; true merit seeks a more advantageous residence, than in such society. Whatever respect you may think due to the different kinds of people with whom you associate, take care that you purchase not the company of others at too dear a price. They have never rightly estimated what is due to social life, who sacrifice their time, their liberty, and their virtue to it.

SUCH as divide their whole time betwixt dress and amusements, are a sort of beings which merely exist ; and who, under a pretence of rendering themselves

useful

CONF. IV.

useful to the public, only think of gratifying their pride, and dissipating chagrin. It is impossible to be at rest in our own minds, when we give ourselves up to the hurry of the world: private friendship must not be supported at our country's expence; to the latter we owe much more than to the former; we must not therefore sacrifice the one, out of too much complaisance for the other. If there are some men who do nothing, it is because they have no proper sense of their duty to God, or to their Country. Complaisance degenerates into weakness, when we have not resolution enough to resist the importunities of an artful woman, or the solicitations of an idle man: only make a point of being constantly well employed, and you will easily get rid of this sort of persecution.

THE greatest mischief is, when we do not distinguish betwixt the fashion of the world

world, and the duties which we owe to society ; whereas there is a wonderful difference between them. The one engages us in a train of foolish expences, vicious intrigues, and a round of unprofitable idleness ; the other makes us useful and friendly, and offers to us only those amusements which are innocent and proper.

CONTR. IV.

A social man is really a friend to his country ; a man of the world (in the sense in which we have just now considered him) would sacrifice his country to his interest and his pleasures. When this attachment to the world has taken possession of the heart, its votaries only exist for the sake of gratification ; and what dependence can there be on a mind that is subject to the tyranny of pleasure ?

He, who attends to the duties which he owes to society, is like a stream, which diffuses itself through a beautiful meadow ; but he, who gives himself up to the world,

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CONF. IV. is like a torrent, which hastens to empty itself into the sea : in the one we discover nothing but delight, in the other nothing but noise and violence. The love of society constitutes a part of our duty ; the love of the world makes us forgetful of every duty. I have been too well acquainted with this dangerous world ; and it is because I foolishly confounded it with ideas of society, that I am at present so well able to distinguish betwixt them.

Alas ! I thought once, there was no being sociable, without being present at every entertainment, at every play, and at every assembly ; and I had so thoroughly reconciled myself to this notion, that I should have looked upon any one, as the most stupid and unsociable of all creatures, that did not readily concur with me in my ideas. So powerful is the love of pleasure, that it puts a false interpretation upon every thing, and assumes the language

language of folly instead of that of reason. CONF. IV.

THIS delusion, one of the strongest that can be imagined among persons of a certain rank, makes them attach themselves to the world, without scruple or reserve: they doat upon it, under the pretext of being sociable; and they persuade themselves that the unprofitable toil, which it imposes, is a duty which it is necessary for them to perform.

IT is my earnest desire, that my own past imprudence should prove useful to you; and that you would not make *society* consist in any thing, but what it really is; that is to say, in a polite intercourse, which unites us to each other;---in friendly visits, which cannot be dispensed with;---in letters of civility, which we ought to write;---and in that necessary familiarity, which we mutually stand in need of for the purposes of relaxation:

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CONF. IV. all beyond this, deserves not the name  
of society.

AFTER determining, what it is to be really and properly social, it is necessary for us to know, how we ought to conduct ourselves in the company of others. Many rules have been laid down upon this subject; and they are plainly reducible to these: never to speak, but to the purpose: never to rally, but with good humour: never to appear supercilious: never to indulge caprice: never to shew any thing inconsistent with a good heart. Strokes of humour may please for a moment; but good sense is always agreeable, and always gives satisfaction: we cannot endure that, which lets us down; and therefore we are much better pleased with him who only says common things, than with him, whose turn of conversation is of a superior kind: nature is always preferable to art.

LEARN

LEARN to make use of your wit, without shewing that you are vain of it; the less you affect to shew it, the more admirers you will find, and the more friends. Equally avoid both railly and flattery; the one is always considered as ill-nature, the other passes for deceit. In former times it was necessary to praise in the most extravagant terms, in order to attract a smile, or even a gracious look: the ladies of the present age deem such commendations ridiculous; and rather than be disgusted by flattery, they wish never to be complimented.

IF you are so happy as to have a grave and studious turn, you will find fewer of these lesser duties on your hands. All those important trifles, which the world calls little attentions (tho' absolutely necessary within proper limits) seem in their extreme to belong only to *Petits Maitres*; because every thing that is insignificant is suited to that character. You

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CONF. IV. are undone, if ever you propose such as these for your examples : I never saw one of them, whose mind was not utterly ruined by his folly : they are fit only to afford diversion, and they always do it at their own expence. When the arrival of one of these gentry is announced, only by the scent of amber and musk, and when he brings nothing with him but impertinence, it is impossible that any man of sense can be pleased with such company.

IT is by good manners and a genteel air, that others are prepossessed in our favour : every man has so much self-love, as to oppose him, who wishes to trample upon those about him : we love to see the charms of sweetness in a modest countenance : while you are possessed of these graces, my children, all the world will admire you. It is not necessary, in order to be sociable, that you be eloquent, or witty, or possessed of any rare or superior

rior talents ; all that society demands of **CONSP. IV.** you is, that you be complaisant without meanness, polite without flattery, steady without rudeness, and sprightly without affectation : she requires that you cultivate her, as the friend of mankind ; and that you do her honour by an unblemished reputation, by decency in your words, and purity in your morals.

A farther knowlege of the world will teach you many particulars, on which my weakness will not suffer me to enlarge ; it will furnish you with that gracefulness, that ease in your carriage, that politeness, that propriety of behaviour, which ought to distinguish a person of fashion : it will shew you the necessity of not publishing stories without caution, of not judging of any performances but with modesty ; and of not speaking of your neighbour, but with reserve : it will teach you that you ought to be neither the first to set the

CONF. IV. fashion, nor the last to leave it; and in short, that you cannot too carefully avoid the imputation of needless singularity.

BE careful not to slight any person; yet let your attentions be properly regulated: nothing is more improper, than to treat a stranger with the intimacy of a friend; or an intimate friend with the distance due to a superior: distinguish merit wherever you find it, without troubling yourself about the garb in which it appears: court the company of the learned, and the conversation of the aged; their discourse is often more useful, than any book that you can read. Never argue on a subject which you do not understand; every one admires modesty; no one can endure conceit. If you are desired to play for mere amusement, do not decline it; but never play for the sake of gain: if you are unlucky, you will lose with good humour, when the stake is a matter of indifference:

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he that cannot command his temper never fails to discover his weakness, and gives offence to every one about him. Treat the other sex with the utmost delicacy ; it has a claim to the greatest attention : avoid intrigues ; have a strict regard to modesty, and you will never have a quarrel with any female.

NEVER make a rash and inconsiderate promise ; but having made a promise, implicitly observe it : whoever joins the first party that comes in his way, without regarding a prior engagement, does not deserve to have friends : let discretion constantly direct your conduct : and if, notwithstanding all these precautions, you should meet with enemies, they, and not you, will deserve to be blamed.

THE more attention you appear to shew to these instructions, my children, the more dear you must necessarily be to me ; and the less I shall lament the sad separa-

CONF. IV.

tion which death is preparing to make betwixt us: In leaving you well stored with good principles, and furnished with my best advice, I shall think I only lose you in part; and that I shall be always in some degree in the midst of you; it is thus you will be able to find me in your own minds, when you can no longer see or hear me; and I trust you will there find me faithfully represented.

C O N-

C O N F E R E N C E V.

*On Virtue.*

A SUCCESSION of fainting fits had CONF. V. exceedingly weakened this pious mother; but, by an exertion worthy of her virtue and magnanimity, she seemed to forget her bodily weakness, that she might fully express the dictates of her heart. Her children, full of attention, and impressed with the utmost tenderness, looked upon her with a mixture of admiration and grief; while she communicated this valuable lesson of instruction on the subject of Virtue.

VIRTUE, my children, ought to be the ruling principle of all your actions: I cannot but consider her as the offspring of heaven, without whom there would be

CONF. V. nothing in this world but iniquity and impurity. In vain have the most corrupt ages of men endeavoured to obscure her brightness: she forces her way through the thickest cloud of passions; diffusing those rays of glory, which we never can sufficiently admire. Even her enemies are compelled to praise her; and they who themselves are wicked, if not utterly abandoned, would fain be accounted virtuous.

BUT it is not sufficient to bear our testimony in favour of virtue, in empty words; we must do her honour by a conduct which is irreproachable. The eulogium, which we outwardly bestow upon her, must be confirmed by the inward dispositions of the heart.

You will never be truly great, but in proportion as you are virtuous: the highest honours are no more than the pedestal; but merit is the statue erected upon it. This it is, which distinguishes an individual

dual from the multitude ; this it is, which renders him superior to all that birth and fortune can bestow. Our talents do us honour ; and wit gains us credit : but Virtue exalts us even above humanity ; raising us above the events of life, and even above ourselves. With her, we secure the admiration of posterity ; we live in the annals of history ; we never die : without her, on the contrary, we are degraded, we grovel, we only exist, to the dishonour of humanity.

THOUGH she has flourished above 4000 years, she is not yet grown old : we speak of her, as if the great effects of her power were manifested even to this day. The *Romans* are present with us, as though they were but just now dead ; we seem, as it were, eye-witnesses of their glory, and magnanimity : so true is it, that . . .

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CONF. V.

HERE she was obliged to break off her discourse, that she might not sink under her extreme weakness; and she had only just strength enough left to tell her children, who were melted into tears, that she must defer the remainder 'till another day.

C O N-

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C O N F E R E N C E VI.

*Further instructions on the same subject.*

FOUR days had now passed, within which this excellent lady had not been able to converse with her children; but happily her illness abated, and she now renewed her instructions.

CONF. VI.

You see me, says she, restored to you for a little time; and it is with the greatest satisfaction I avail myself of this short respite, from the pleasing hope of rendering the few remaining hours of my life as useful to you as possible. *Virtue*, of which I was speaking in my last conference with you, is so fruitful a field, that one might compose large volumes upon this subject. O! that I were able to represent her to you surrounded with that

CONF. VI. that peace, which is peculiar to her; adorned with those charms, which distinguish her supported; by that true greatness, which is her characteristic! You would see that she was formed to be the empress of the universe; that she alone deserves our regard; that her sublime perfections would have altars erected in every heart, if man were not a dupe to his passions: the higher she is raised, the more modest is her deportment; the more charms she possesses, the more studious is she to conceal them.

IN vain doth vice oppose her attractions, and declare open war against her: the remorse, which disturbs the soul of every sinner, comes to avenge her cause, and to teach us that there is no happiness, but what is found in the possession of Virtue. Attach yourselves therefore closely to her, and you will find that the perfection of happiness consists in the enjoyment  
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of her. I never knew what real pleasure was, 'till I became acquainted with the worth of Virtue, and the greatness of her beauty. As a proof of this, my dearest children, I can with truth assure you, that notwithstanding I am on all sides surrounded with the shadow of death, I feel an inward joy which I am not able to express. This is the present happy effect of my love for virtue; which has taken such possession of my heart, that nothing can materially affect me, which hath not some relation to her: even you are only so far dear to me, as I trust you will prove really good and virtuous.

THIS disposition, however, is the gift of GOD, and cannot be derived from ourselves alone; it is therefore the subject of my constant prayers, that you may be filled with that grace, which I have so often and so earnestly implored for myself. No one will be richer than you, if you  
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Conc. VI. are in possession of this treasure; you can then be placed in no situation of life, in which you will not distinguish yourselves by some laudable action. In each of you, the indigent will find a beneficent father; your family, an equitable and kind master; your relations, an affectionate and generous friend; your Country, a zealous supporter; your King, a most faithful subject: in short, all men will consider you as their brethren, who only live to comfort and assist them.

WHAT a blessing will riches and honours prove in your hands, if you are really virtuous! You will then become a source of comfort, perpetually flowing to communicate happiness to all mankind.

YOUR favour will be implored, as though ye were, in some degree, the ministers of heaven; and men will bless you, as doing honour to the age and nation in which you live.

VIRTUE

VIRTUS is far from being unrewarded even in this life. What a satisfaction do we feel, on awaking from sleep, that we have it in our will, and in our power, to distinguish the approaching day by some act of mercy to the wretched! How are we delighted with such sentiments as these! What transport doth the combination of such virtues afford! These are the never-failing attendants on good men.

You must however beware of confounding natural disposition with the dictates of virtue; we often mistake constitutional firmness for heroic magnanimity: vivacity of temper produces courage, as phlegm occasions prudence. We can only know, by a strict enquiry into ourselves, the true motive on which we act. If it be really virtue which excites us, there will be neither affectation, nor severity: simplicity and moderation will every where appear. They who carry things

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CONF. VI. to an extreme, know not, that even wisdom itself must be tempered with sobriety.

I am not fond of those outrageous virtues, which certain enthusiasts recommend as the characteristics of human perfection. True virtue shews herself by a most obliging deportment; the more gracious her air is, the more strongly she engages our attachment: we are offended at the sight of a countenance, which is overspread with a cloud of severity.

TAKE care then to exhibit nothing in your outward behaviour, but what is truly amiable; for otherwise you will disfigure virtue, and make her appear different from what she really is: all that we add of our own, is only an alloy unworthy of her purity. It is our misfortune, that there is too great a want of sincerity amongst us: accustomed from our infancy to dissemble, we think nothing excellent but

but what is disguised; whereas there is no **CONF. VI.**  
virtue where there is no truth.

LAY this down as a maxim, and you will detest every species of dissimulation; there is nothing more odious, than a mind enslaved to falsehood, a heart in which duplicity prevails. It is better to speak the truth, tho' it should prove to our own hurt, than to make use of the least equivocation to gain the greatest advantage.

ALL the riches in the world are not worth one single virtue: so that if you were allowed to make your choice betwixt the wealth which you are to possess, and the virtues which I have recommended to you to practise, you ought not to hesitate a moment, which of these you should prefer. A man, who is truly virtuous, can never be really wretched. He finds in himself those rich resources, which even princes are unable to bestow: always patient and resigned, he does not find his

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CON<sup>R.</sup>. VI,

mind agitated with the vicissitudes of fortune. His thoughts are raised above the sufferings of the present life, to the joys of a much happier state; and the sublimity of his sentiments renders him superior to all the calamities, which fortune can inflict.

A soul, in which virtue resides, is the nearest representation of heaven itself: all is serenity, and light, and joy: the troubles of the world cannot interrupt its repose, the cloud of passions cannot diminish its brightness.

RELIGION is the only solid foundation of morality; this wisdom is the chief ornament of the human mind, and the chief director of our life. Without this, the heart is degraded, the whole soul is degenerate; we are dissatisfied with ourselves, and we have only fools or libertines for our companions and friends.

Ask any man who has preferred a vicious to a virtuous course of life; and, if he

he is sincere, he will acknowledge that his uneasiness was continual; that his joy was merely external; that his imagination was bewildered; that his passions consumed him; that his actions brutalized him; and that his whole mind and body were exhausted.

CONF. VI.

WE need not wait for the coming of that awful day, when God shall punish vice, to know how odious she is: even in this life she carries with her her own condemnation. Her most eloquent and bold panegyrists have never been able, with all their endeavours, to cover that deformity, which attends her; and always renders her the object of detestation. Go into any country that you please; and you will find vice proscribed, and virtue honoured.

IN what ignominious terms doth history make mention of vicious princes! It speaks of them with horror; and never so much

CONF. VI. as names them, but to make them odious  
to every age and nation.

A vicious man is a stranger to prudence, decency, and honesty: he neither reads, nor speaks, nor acts, but with a view to gratify the violence of his passions, and bitterly to inveigh against virtue, which excites his indignation so much the more, as he finds it impossible to hate her.

I would not wish for more than the mere presence of a libertine, to fill any reflecting mind with horror. He is a monster, that destroys all the pleasure of society; that stifles every worthy sentiment; that rebels against every law of reason; and that defies Heaven itself with a shocking and intolerable insolence.

FROM such dreadful excesses as these Virtue, my dear children, will preserve you: It will not only remove you at a distance from every sinful act, but also from every occasion of finning. It will inspire  
you

you with an utter aversion from those pre- CONF. VI.  
sumptuous offenders, whose very breath is  
infectious; it will encourage you to your  
several duties; it will prove the best secu-  
rity against idleness, which is justly  
esteemed the parent of every kind of  
wickedness.

THERE is no situation of life,  
wherein virtue will not be found useful;  
as there is none in which vice can be ex-  
cused. This religious principle will make  
us patient in adversity; humble in prof-  
perity; prudent in business; moderate in  
pleasures; undaunted in dangers; affable  
in conversation; judicious in the manage-  
ment of our domestic concerns. A man is  
always acting amiss, when he is not vir-  
tuous; his conduct is a satire against him-  
self: and he finds only mean and base  
minds, that will venture to applaud him.

WHILE we practise virtue, we belong,  
as it were, to Heaven: while we lead a

CONF. VI. disorderly life, we are retained in the service of our passions. The observance of our duty unites us with good men; the love of vice throws us into the company of the wicked.

THE world will not fail to throw abundance of obstacles in your way, to hinder your approach to virtue; but the difficulties will presently vanish, whenever you enter into an examination of your own hearts: you will then find, that it is impossible to be truly good, without all those qualities, which religion demands; you will then find, that the inconstancy of the human mind has need to be fixed by the authority of wisdom and justice.

The vivacity of youth is too apt to form a false idea of religion, as throwing a veil of melancholy over the world and all its pleasures. But such young people are greatly mistaken: Wisdom and goodness are very consistent with, if they are not indeed

indeed the only source of, Chearfulness. CONF. VI.  
If you look into the world, and attend  
carefully to the actions of men, you will  
find true enjoyment only among those who  
are really virtuous: Others indeed may  
*appear* with more noisy jollity about them;  
but this is only a kind of intemperate ex-  
cess, which, in a few minutes, will give  
place to an insupportable melancholy.  
When a man is only joyous by fits and by  
compulsion, the heart remains a prey to  
dissipation and remorse.

IF what I have said to you in recom-  
mendation of virtue is not sufficient to  
determine you in favour of her charms;  
recall to your minds your excellent father;  
review the history of your illustrious an-  
cestors: and by no means dishonour their  
memory by a conduct so widely different  
from theirs. The life which you derive  
from them, should pass as incorrupt as  
theirs: you ought to bear their name,

CONF. VI. only that you may shew to posterity, that  
you are so many living representatives of  
their virtues.

I flatter myself, my admonitions will not easily be effaced; and that you will study that moderation in all things, which constitutes true wisdom. Your minds will never be truly great, except whilst, being steady without boldness, prudent without avarice, liberal without profusion, you ennable every action of your lives. Take heed that you do not, even in secret, divest yourselves of that prudence and caution, which you outwardly profess; you must never forget, that you ought to be virtuous, for the sake of Virtue, and for the sake of Heaven. A truly good man is he, who acts, as if his whole conduct was open to the sight and examination of God and men.

C O N.

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C O N F E R E N C E VII.

O n P L E A S U R E .

A S God, my dear children, is pleased CONF. VII. to prolong my life, and to enable me to continue my instructions to you, I shall take this opportunity of dwelling more at large on the subject of Pleasure; the chief rock against which you are in danger of splitting. Youth is the season, in which pleasures present themselves to the imagination, to seduce and captivate it. They begin by dazzling our sight; and when once they have succeeded in this point, they soon assume the empire of the heart: There they establish their dominion, and choke every seed of virtue.

As soon as the inordinate love of pleasure takes possession of the soul, virtue is obliged

CONF.VII. obliged to retire; we are thenceforth wholly taken up with such objects as gratify the passions, cherish effeminacy, and support vanity: we seek for nothing but mischievous indulgencies, we listen only to the dictates of our sensual appetites.

THERE is no man, who is not fond of ease and tranquility: This principle is so deeply imprinted in our minds, that we must divest ourselves of our nature, before we can think otherwise. But by *tranquility of mind*, I mean that pure satisfaction, which has nothing in common with those gratifications, in which the world chiefly delights: for you cannot be too often told, that the pleasures which it pursues, as its sovereign good, are only phantoms which mislead us.

I am no stranger to these boasted delights: I have been sufficiently engaged in their vain pursuit; and from my own experience I can with truth declare, that they

they only serve to lull reason to sleep. It is, in short, a state of stupefaction, which terminates in remorse; a dream, from which, when we awake, we find a *vacuum*, which we are not able to supply. I always fancied, that they would fill my heart with the most perfect joy; and I found myself constantly disappointed.

THOUGH the soul drink ever so largely of this cup, it never finds that inward satisfaction, which leaves nothing farther to be desired: we never can be completely happy, whilst we are under the government of our passions.

IF I had time and ability to analyze those pleasures to which the world is enslaved, I could demonstrate to you the insufficiency of public diversions and amusements to give real satisfaction to a rational mind. It is sufficient to know that they are trifling, that they are fatiguing, that they are transient; whereas the soul can

find

CONF. VII. find no real happiness in that, which is not substantial, peaceful, and unchangeable. We always, therefore, offer violence to our better part, when we launch forth into that tumultuous ocean of trifles, which constitute the life of people of fashion. It is only by stifling reflection, that the lovers of pleasure can support themselves: they well know, that a little serious consideration would give them a distaste for the pleasures which they are pursuing, and therefore they do every thing they can to get rid of it. Thus do they live in wilful ignorance even of their own minds.

How often does the theatre, which we are fond of calling the school of true politeness and just sentiments, carry us away from ourselves, and render us the slaves of passion! It is generally love, which performs the principal character, and which is represented in the most alluring

luring manner: We seldom attend, I CONF. VII. believe, to what is passing there, without returning more enamoured with the world, more passionately fond of dress, more strongly inclined to dissipation. The glaring appearance of the stage, the sentiments there delivered, and the objects exhibited, all serve to enchant the senses, excite the passions, intoxicate the mind, and encourage the love of pleasure.

THINK not, I assume the language of a preacher; mine is only that of reason and experience. The theatre is very frequently the ruin of young men, whom the sight of an actress seduces, and carries headlong into every species of mischief. From that moment, all domestic attachments are at an end; all relative duties are neglected; a total disorder in their affairs succeeds; and they become the subject of public conversation, and the au-  
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CONF.VII. thors of ruin to themselves and to their  
families.

I defy the advocates for these entertainments to deny the facts just mentioned. Alas! what I have said is too frequently verified, to question the truth of it. In vain are we told, that the tears, which we shed in the theatre, teach us to be compassionate; the momentary tenderness, excited by romance, seldom if ever materially affects the heart. Some, who are just come from a scene, at which they were almost dissolved into tears, could with dry eyes behold the wretch, who, in want of every comfort, implores their pity and relief.

ASSEMBLIES have so often proved the occasions of intrigues and duels, that I cannot venture to recommend them to you. It is certainly very proper, that a young man of fashion should know how to introduce himself, at such places; and

parti-

particularly, that he should be able to ~~Cony. VII.~~ dance gracefully. But it is also very necessary, that he should know, that of all qualifications, dancing is the least considerable: that a man of science looks on it with an eye of pity; and that an officer ought neither too curiously to study it, nor too earnestly engage in it; it is the property of persons of a trifling character, to be wholly occupied by trifles.

As to play; there is no species of it, which does not stand in need of some apology, to excuse it. At best, it shews a feebleness of mind, which is incapable of proper application; and occasions a loss of time which it is impossible to redeem: you must never consider it, but as a necessary recreation, and an act of civility which you owe to society. But lay this down as a maxim, that the money, which we win, seldom does us the least good; and that the loss of our money seldom fails to disconcert us.

Or

CONF. VII.

OF games of hazard I say nothing; they are so dangerous that I am persuaded you will most carefully avoid them: in these, men either lose their reputation, or their fortune, or both. And however rich they may suppose themselves, from the moment they commence gamesters, they can never insure their being worth a shilling: a single throw often reduces an opulent man to absolute beggary.

I am, perhaps, wrong, in reckoning play in the number of pleasures; it certainly has much more the appearance of study, than of recreation. The eyes fixed, the attention engrossed, a deep silence, a restless inquietude arising from the fear of losing or the hopes of gain, exclude the most distant idea of pleasure. This is the state of all who lose: they are full of care, they are full of complaints, they torment themselves; and when they are seen *playing*, to say the truth, they do every thing but *play*.

As

As for feasts: they are only our ordinary meals, embellished by elegance and a variety of meats. They may serve to remind us, that this body of ours is a slave, that has a great many wants to be supplied; and that all these kinds of food, with which our vanity is fed, were originally designed merely for a remedy against death. It is a sure indication of a degenerate mind, when any man makes his happiness to consist in the pleasure of eating.

Do not imagine, my dear children, that I have the least desire of making you unsociable, or morose. My intention is only to inspire you with elevated sentiments; to teach you the true value of things; that you may not mistake tinsel for gold; but that you may use this world as not abusing it: and that you may be assured, that a conscientious discharge of your duty is the only source of real pleasure; that to reach forth comfort to the

CONF. VII. miserable gives the truest satisfaction; and furnishes the mind with that enjoyment, which no entertainments or diversions can afford.

CAN there be a more pitiable object than one, whose whole happiness depends on a fox chace, a concert, or a play? Should either of these fail him, he is undone: or if by chance he should be so circumstanced, as to be out of the reach of them, he is so miserable, that his existence is a burthen to him.

WHO, on the contrary, is more happy than he, that, furnished with the means of amusing solitude, can sit down and relish the pleasures of reading and contemplation? Such a man goes out into the world merely for recreation, and to discharge the duties which he owes to society: he considers public amusements as incidental means of relaxation; but never can be induced to set his heart on such useless trifles.

As

As your military life may often carry you to live in countries very ill supplied even with common necessaries, you must accustom yourselves to be well satisfied, wherever you are. In order to which, reflect, that the mind is the principal object, which deserves your attention ; and that if you cultivate the growth of virtue in your hearts, you will have within yourselves a never-failing source of satisfaction.

THE diversions of the field are certainly amusing ; the charms of music are unquestionably great ; but our attachment to either falls little short of madness, if we suffer them to engross our whole time, or our best affections. It is temperance, which must give a relish even to our pleasures ; and which alone renders them worthy of a rational soul. When we would be always amused, we lose the idea of amusement ; even what is most delicious

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CONF.VII. becomes insipid, by being constantly within our reach. Every thing grows dull to that heart, which is a prey to voluptuousness; every unnecessary refinement made use of to whet the appetite for pleasure, produces a painful satiety. If you only consider recreation, as the remedy of fatigue, it will be very easy to find amusement: studied pleasures are only for those, whose appetites are in a manner exhausted.

As you are now arrived at an age, in which your passions begin to shew themselves, guard with the utmost care against every thing which may corrupt your morals, or disturb your tranquility. Youth is the torrid zone of life; and the irregular love of women the source of inquietude and misfortunes. History abounds with instances of those ravages which it is continually making: it presents itself to us under the attractive idea of pleasure; but

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it soon becomes a torment, which disorders the imagination, distracts the mind, and tyrannizes over the heart. CONF. VII.

WHOEVER is thoroughly subject to its power, is always ready to violate the most sacred duties: he forgets his friends, his country, and his GOD; he sees nothing but the object of his passion; he hearkens to nothing but the voice of his unbridled desires.

IN this dreadful situation you will be sure to find yourselves, if you know not how to fill up your time in a proper manner. The passions must be subdued by the stubbornness of labour; and temptation must be resisted, by avoiding the occasions of it: we are sure of being lost, whenever we seek for danger. The miseries of lust may be read in the very faces of those, who give themselves up to it. Nothing exhausts and enervates like debauchery; it destroys at once the understanding and the health.

CONF. VII. You will tell me, perhaps, that by my system of morality all pleasures are forbidden: No, my children; there are many recreations, which virtue allows; and in which you will find sufficient satisfaction, when you only seek them for the sake of amusement.

A social game at cards, cheerful conversation, an evening walk, an interesting book, a game at tennis, or a day's hunting, a dinner with your friends, and innocent mirth—these should be your amusements. And these will have charms enough, if you know the nature of true pleasure; I mean that, which is not purchased with pain or remorse; and which, leaving the mind at all times in the same easy state in which it found it, is under no apprehension of shame, nor fears the censures of mankind.

If a libertine would venture to calculate all the difficulties and embarrassments, which

which he is under, to disguise his conduct from the eyes of men, and to conceal his shame from his parents or his friends; he would see that his life is a continual torment: and that the wretched privilege of ruining his constitution, and destroying his life, is purchased with endless vexations. In vain does he shelter himself from the reproaches of men; God sees him and his crimes, in the very moment of commission; and they are written in that everlasting book, in which all our actions are recorded.

FREQUENTLY reflect, I beseech you, on what I have said; and you will find, that true satisfaction consists only in an upright attention to your duty. A mind so composed will receive pleasure even from the sight of a flower beginning to disclose its beauties, or from a murmuring stream; or even from viewing the formation of the smallest insect. A reflecting

CONF. VII. mind improves every contemplation of the wonderful works of the Creator; it finds numberless beauties in those objects, which pass unnoticed by persons of a dissipated turn.

WHAT delight is the prospect of a flowery meadow capable of affording to a mind unsullied by vice! What satisfaction does a tender and a virtuous heart feel, from the conscious sense of a good action! Such as these are the pleasures, which I wish you to experience: we are always independent, when we have the resources of entertainment within ourselves. He, who is always running about in search of happiness, seldom finds any thing more than the shadow of it.

LET your minds then open themselves to the pleasures, which Virtue offers to your acceptance; and think, that, as effeminacy is the parent of chagrin, you will no longer be able to support yourselves, than

than while you are fond of labour, and CONF.VII. know how to diversify it. This variety tends admirably to hinder distaste; nothing being so tedious as an uniform sameness of employment.

WHILST you carefully avoid the company of libertines, I am sure you will be safe; but if once you associate with them, you will infallibly become a prey to vice: their conversation tends only to seduce, and their examples are infectious. Accustomed to receive, from the most plausible writers, whatever can inspire them with the love of pleasure, they praise, extol, and recommend them wherever they go: as a cloud scatters hail, or rain, over every country through which it passes.

I am sensible that you have need of resolution. But what is a man, that is driven about with every wind? who can be good with such as are good, and a libertine

CONF.VII. bertine with such as are dissolute; in  
short, who has no inclinations or purpose  
of his own. If you think my advice  
tends only to render your life melancholy;  
you will neither do justice to my af-  
fection, nor to my discernment. Adopt  
the measures which I recommend: and  
you will very soon know, by experience,  
that as your happiness is the only earthly  
object of my care; so I am neither mis-  
taken in the end, nor in the means which  
I point out to you, of effecting it. The  
voice of a mother, so deeply interested as  
I am in your welfare, is not the voice of  
treachery. Death approaching begins  
to open my eyes; and imparts to me new  
rays of light: it destroys indeed my bo-  
dily strength, but it increases the powers  
of my understanding. It redoubles my  
love of those, whom I consider as a part  
of myself, which will soon survive me;  
and, as it were, secure to me a continuance  
on

on that earth, on which I shall no longer CONF.VIL  
personally exist.

IF any thing can afford me comfort in death, it will be the confidence, that you will conscientiously observe my precepts. Promise me, therefore, my beloved children, with such expressions as a sense of duty will suggest; promise me on the truth of a soldier, whose word of honour is most sacred; promise me that you will conform your lives to the rules which I have here laid down, and that you will not dishonour my memory by an irregular and vicious conduct.

HERE the children of our excellent mother cast themselves at her feet: and in the midst of tears and sighs protested, that their lives should be exactly such, as she had marked out to them; and that they had rather die in her presence, than make her such promises, as they did not mean to perform. Each of them embraced her in

CONF.VII. in the tenderest manner; after which the generous parent finished her conference by saying, in a steady but interrupted tone of voice—

I receive your protestation with the utmost comfort: I would make it known, that it might be a witness against you, if you should ever counteract your own solemn engagements. The world, corrupt as it is, would then shew, that it has virtue enough to set itself against you, and vindicate my rights: but in so doing, I should think I dishonoured you by my unjust apprehensions. Only remember, that no one, without God's assisting grace, can attain to any thing that is good; and that you stand in need of succour from heaven, to enable you to put in practice what you have promised.

**C O N F E R E N C E VIII.**

*On A M B I T I O N.*

THIS evening shall be employed in **CON. VIII.** finishing the manuscript, which your father left you; let us give it that attention, which it deserves.

THE love of Honour being the passion of persons of rank, and especially of soldiers; it is very necessary that you should be taught the best means of regulating it. If it has no bounds, it becomes an headstrong vice; which is ready to sacrifice families, provinces, and kingdoms, nay even the whole universe to its own interest. Massacres, wars, depredations of every kind, take their rise only from a false ambition: when this affection of the mind is improved into a system, we no longer

CONF.VII. longer regard the law, our country, or  
our God.

I have never been able to read the history of those wretched people without horror, who, to satisfy their inordinate desires, have effected the utter subversion of a whole nation, and feasted their eyes and their hearts with the dreadful spectacle. They are monsters, which deserved to have been buried in oblivion: history ought not even to have transmitted their names to our remembrance. Immortality is the reward of virtue alone; as for wickedness, it is worthy to be consigned to that darkness, whence it proceeded.

THERE is a kind of ambition, which we call emulation; and which, having nothing in its view but the public good, or its own advancement, according to the strictest rules of equity and honour, must needs be considered as a virtue. Without this species of ambition, our faculties

ties would be benumbed, our talents CON. VIIIL  
would remain buried; there would be no enterprize, or discovery in the world: men, reduced to a level with the brute creation, would live without rule and without reason.

IT was the design of Providence, that our own private interest should be intimately connected with that of the public; and that the general good should be promoted by the exertion of each man's particular abilities. Every one seems to be labouring for himself; and yet this labour, tho' *self* appears to be the immediate object, soon unites with the common mass of industry: and thus is composed that useful body of men, who maintain the strength and magnificence of the state, at the hazard of their lives, or by the sweat of their brows.

WE are no where forbidden to keep our own advancement in our view; but we are

CON. VIII. are at all times required to prefer the good  
of the public before our private interest: and while we are less concerned about our own advantage, than about that of our country, we shall never desire any thing, but what is just and reasonable. When either arrogance or avarice so far prevails, as to make us wish to appropriate to ourselves the praises and rewards, which are not our due, we then become usurpers, and cease to be worthy citizens.

AMBITION is a passion, which runs into every extreme: one while it debases him, who is enslaved to it; at another time it exalts him above measure: it is the parent of pride on one hand, and of meanness on the other. Of this sort are those obsequious wretches, who bow themselves at the feet of such as are able to promote them; while they treat those with contempt, from whom they have nothing to expect.

WE

WE must be well acquainted with the CON. VIII. ambitious, if we would be competent judges of the miseries they endure. We should then see what variety of projects, what a succession of uneasinesses, fill their imagination: how their minds are distracted with hopes and fears; how continually they are deluded with the phantom of glory, which suddenly vanishes away; and which makes the ambitious man think himself perpetually on the brink of happiness, without ever actually attaining to it. Scarce is one of his desires gratified, when a second presents itself: his heart, like the vessel of the *Danaides*, can never be filled; he is like another *Tantalus*, whose thirst is never to be quenched. What a lamentable state is this!

WHETHER it is the design of Providence to stop the ambitious in his career, or whether he is exhausted by his own desires;

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CON.VIII. I have seen a multitude of young people, hurried away by this passion, perish in the midst of their projects of grandeur and advancement. Alas! will there not be earth enough, to supply us with a grave; and must we be incessantly reminded, that this life is so short and transitory, that there is not time to form designs, and to see them executed?

IT should seem, that the honours with which men feed their imagination, must needs be eternal; and yet — a single moment is sufficient to put an end both to them and their possessors. The earth is covered with inscriptions, which announce the transitory condition of human grandeur: we spend our whole lives in desiring that promotion, at which we never arrive, or, at least, not before the eve of death. Truly it was well worth our while, to torment ourselves night and day, about what is so full of uncertainty, and of so short duration!

THERE

THERE is only one sort of ambition, CON. VIII.  
which I can venture to recommend to you ;  
that of imitating your ancestors, and of  
serving your country with a zeal which  
nothing can diminish. In every thing else,  
let moderation set bounds to your desires :  
he is worthy of every thing, who thinks he  
deserves nothing.

THEY who are continually complaining  
of the injustice done them, because their  
merit is not properly attended to, are men  
of a most ignoble spirit : we adopt a very  
different language, when we feel in our  
minds that generosity of sentiments which  
raises us above the caprice of fortune.  
The meer satisfaction of having honourably  
served the public, is of more value, than  
every kind of recompence. We must put  
ourselves in a situation to hope for every  
thing from heaven ; this will prove the best  
ground of comfort, amidst all the injustice  
of men. .

CON. VIII.

I should be very miserable, if I thought you could only rise, by means of intrigue. Shew on all occasions a generous greatness of mind, which raises you above all the little artifices, and base compliances, which ambition studies. Habituate yourselves to desire no other advancement, than that which may arise from the performance of your duty; chuse rather to live in obscurity, than to shine with a borrowed lustre. If we would be really honoured by the dignities conferred on us, we must never be ashamed to declare, by what means we attained to them: true honour consists not so much in obtaining promotion, as in having deserved it. Those titles, with which a man of fashion is distinguished, no longer afford him any real satisfaction, than while they are confirmed by the public approbation.

IF you love the truth, as I trust you always will, you will be utter strangers to flattery

flattery and duplicity; but you must expect in return, that Fortune, who bestows the chief of her favours on compliance and deceit, will not reckon you in the number of her favourites. You will then be great, only in the way which is proper for you; true glory will never leave you. You will find in yourselves those honours and riches, which are not to be found in courts; and you will have this satisfaction, that neither injuries nor death itself will be able to take any thing from you.

IT is time for you, my children, to shew to the world an example of true magnanimity: the hearts of too many are so debased, that they only think how they may arrive at honours, without concerning themselves whether the means are generous and lawful. Envy, which always forms an atmosphere round virtuous characters, will perhaps consider you as proud; but what doth calumny avail, against a con-

ON. VIII. science void of offence? It is then we rest satisfied with our own integrity; and are contented to defy malevolence. Whoever resolutely devotes himself to the practice of virtue, will not fail to have enemies; so invariably is it the lot of real merit to be persecuted, that it is laid down as an axiom, that it must be so.

IT is not sufficient to be possessed of military courage. You must have a strength of mind, which extends itself to every part of your conduct; which raises you above all the rumours of malice and envy; which makes you despise reports and cabals; and which renders you invulnerable by the shafts of ingratitude and revenge.

DO not imagine that, under the pretext of elevating your minds, I wish so to debase them, as to make you indifferent to every insult which may be offered to you: all I have to say on so delicate a subject, is, that your own prudence must be your chief defence.

defence. By being affable and well-bred, CON. VIII.  
you will avoid those dreadful encounters,  
in which we know what we ought to do,  
but do not know, what we shall be com-  
pelled to do.

WHATEVER may happen to you, never  
forget, that every subject owes his life  
to his King and Country; and that *you*  
doubly owe your's, both as citizens and  
soldiers. You are appointed by the state  
as centinels, to watch in its defence;  
the preservation therefore of your own  
lives is a necessary part of your duty.

IF a trial must be made of your per-  
sonal courage, war will furnish you with  
abundant opportunities of shewing it.  
You never will be accused of want of  
bravery, whilst you are seen the last in a  
retreat, and the foremost to engage; it  
is in such situations, that a noble ambi-  
tion ought to influence your conduct.  
When you have only desires of this kind,

CON. VIII. virtue will secure them, and crown them  
with blessing and good success.

THE duties of a soldier are the properest to excite emulation; they never want opportunities to distinguish themselves. Even peace furnishes them with means of exercising their faculties both of mind and body. It is then they make themselves masters of their profession, and become accomplished through study and practice.

WHEN your rank requires you to make your appearance at court, you will not fail to attend there: not for the sake of offering the incense of adulation to the great, nor to solicit more lucrative employments, but merely to form honourable connections with noblemen of the best character; and to cherish in your hearts that respectful and filial love, which you owe to your King. Let merit alone speak in your behalf; and leave it to those

those who wish you well, to give it its CON. VIII.  
proper weight. Your attendance at court  
will not then be irksome to you; and  
courtiers will not look upon you with a  
jealous eye. As you will not have any  
pretensions, you will have no inducement  
to act a part; and this simplicity and ease  
being something uncommon, will perhaps  
more strongly recommend you than dis-  
simulation. We had once an Ambassador\*,  
who surprised those of every other  
court, and obtained every thing he want-  
ed, by always speaking the truth. Be-  
hold, in him, the perfect model of a  
worthy minister!

THE minds of men are so corrupt, that  
I should not be at all surprized, if these  
hints for your future conduct were con-  
sidered as romantic notions; but if you  
consult truth and experience, you will  
think very differently of them. They

\* COBERT.

will

CON. VIII. will convince you, that it is not from the  
republic of *Plato* that I derive these ad-  
monitions; and that you will never be  
truly happy, but when you reduce them  
into practice. Follow after virtue; make  
a grateful return for the love which I  
have shewn you; honour your mother,  
listen to her instructions: and remember,  
that there are no people upon earth, with  
whom the advice of a dying parent is not  
accounted as sacred as an oracle.

THIS conference made such an impres-  
sion upon them, that they kept a pro-  
found silence; till their mother, whose  
very soul was filled with a tender anxiety  
for her children's happiness, thus addres-  
sed them: Such, my dear children, are  
the truths, of which your hearts must be  
the faithful depositaries; and which you  
must have continually before your eyes,  
as the most lively image of your father.  
I would to God he had survived me!

You

You would have found in the strength of CON. VIII.  
his understanding, and in the greatness  
of his sentiments, every thing that is ca-  
pable of improving and perfecting your  
own. But alas ! this is a vain wish : he  
is departed as a shadow. You have  
only had a father---to regret the loss of  
him ; and the hour is at hand, when you  
will have nothing left you but---the re-  
membrance of a mother.

## CONFERENCE IX.

*On GENEROSITY.*

CON. IX.

I HAVE often thought, that amidst all the different modes of educating young people, they have never been sufficiently instructed in the nature of true Generosity. To supply this defect, I intend to shew you, that there is nothing which raises us to a nearer resemblance to the Deity, than the practice of this duty. We become imitators of that Providence, which dispenses its bounty with profusion; and we resemble those beneficial clouds, which distil plenty on every part of the earth.

THE spendthrift is as far from generosity as the miser: they are both of them beings, who have nothing in view but their

their own gratification, without any regard to the necessities of their neighbour. CON. IX.

The one throws his money away, and the other locks it up; but misery receives no consolation from either. There is no virtue, where there is neither discretion, nor any regard for the public good: whatever has nothing better than vanity for its principle, is certainly far from being worthy of praise.

WHAT indeed would become of us, if our sentiments were wholly under the influence of caprice? Nothing but folly and singularity would be found among men; and that attention to the public welfare, which ought to direct our sentiments and conduct, would insensibly come to nought. It is the law of prudence and of reason, which determines the use we ought to make of our talents and abilities; and it is only in following this law, that we advance towards perfection, and do honour to humanity.

RICHES

CON. IX.

RICHES are either an honour, or a disgrace, to those who possess them ; it is a real misfortune to be rich, when we know not how to use our riches. I had infinitely rather leave you in a state of indigence, than know, that you were either covetous or extravagant. Avarice renders us the objects of public indignation ; prodigality carries us headlong into a thousand difficulties. It is generosity alone, which observes the happy medium betwixt both ; which renders us worthy partakers of earthly and heavenly blessings ; provided it is the work of the heart, and not the effect of humour or ostentation.

WHAT delight does it afford one, to see a generous nobleman, who, giving every thing to beneficence, and nothing to vanity, finds resources in frugality, for the supply of the necessities of his friend, the assistance of an indigent widow, or the consolation of the unfortunate ! Such a sight as

this

this addresses itself to the heart ; and, with Con. IX. a power ten thousand times more affecting than any theatrical representation, awakens all the sensibility of the soul, and raises it above humanity itself.

EXHIBIT to the world, my dear children, such a character as this ; consecrate a part of your income to the benefit of your distressed fellow-creatures. Let your liberality extend itself, wherever the miseries of others are urgent ; adapt your bounty to the different degrees of wretchedness : and when circumstances demand it, be generous according to the extent of your ability, and the exigency of the case.

TRUE generosity consists in giving with propriety : the manner of dispensing is oftentimes more pleasing than the gift itself. A man, who gives with an ungracious air, destroys all the merit of his benefaction : if you would oblige by your gene-

CON. IX.

generosity, you must shew the party whom you serve, that you think it more blessed to give than to receive. A liberal man sets a greater value on gold, chiefly because it enables him to relieve the necessitous.

I have often seen your father give large sums of money to the truly distressed ; and perceived that he was more delighted with such an act, than he could have been by any favour conferred upon himself. He felt, in his heart, that there is no satisfaction equal to the pleasure of obliging others. Oh ! if he were now instructing you in my stead, with what earnestness of affection would he encourage you to adopt his sentiments, and imitate his practice ! How often hath the generous tear of pity fallen from his eyes, at the sight of a miserable object ! Many a time has he led me to the habitations of the wretched, to teach me a proper regard for the poor, and

and to excite my desire to comfort them. CON. IX.  
He sought the company of such as needed relief; he conversed freely with them as with brethren: he became a party in their sufferings by a friendly sympathy, and filled their hearts with consolation and joy.

So bright an example must needs engage your reverence and imitation. You are under the strongest obligations to shew those persons, who have experienced the goodness of your father, that his virtues have descended to you, and that you are not degenerate: otherwise, you will only be despised, and will be considered as unworthy of that inheritance which he has left you.

You live in an age, wherein luxury dries up the source of liberality: that we may give full scope to our vanity, we have nothing left for the relief of misery. We do not enquire, how much we can

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spare

CON. IX.

spare for acts of mercy; but what will enable us to gratify our passion for the most expensive pleasures? As for generosity, it passes with some for a romantic virtue: and yet I will venture to assure you, that it is as essential to a man of quality, as courage; and that it even makes a part of honesty itself.

You will never be truly great, but so long as greatness is the principle of your actions. Every thing is little in a nobleman, who is not generous: his ideas are little, his sentiments are mean. The soul grows narrow and confined, when we are thinking only of œconomy; we must know how to spend, and how to give.

GENEROSITY is a virtue, which foresees evil, and endeavours to prevent it; which embraces every opportunity of doing good, and is awakened by the first complaint of the miserable. Listen only to her dictates, and you will liberally re-compense

compensate those who serve you ; you will CON. IX.  
be ready to lend, and will know no greater  
satisfaction, than when you are relieving  
your neighbour. It is shocking to see  
men prefer so worthless a possession as mo-  
ney before the life of their brother ; or to  
see them make use of their riches only to  
feed their vanity and pride. I had rather  
your house were without furniture, and  
your wardrobe without cloaths, than that  
you should be insensible of the miseries of  
the poor. But generosity, which runs not  
to such excess, and is duly mindful of  
measure and proportion, will suggest to  
you the means of reconciling what you owe  
to your rank, with what you owe to your  
neighbour ; it will give order to your do-  
mestic affairs, and an air of greatness to all  
your actions : so as to enable you to be  
œconomical, and yet magnificent on pro-  
per occasions.

CON. IX.

ABRIDGE yourselves as much as possible of those superfluities, which the world esteems fashionable : to be the slave of vanity and folly argues a weak and pusillanimous spirit. A soldier is not allowed to be subject to those trifles, which engross the attention of a *Petit Maître*: nothing is more incompatible with the indulgencies of luxury and pride than a military life; nor does any thing better support the dignity of that character, than a noble, unaffected external appearance. We often have recourse to the world; only because we esteem what is fashionable and specious, in preference to what is really meritorious and praise-worthy.

THE different masters, who have hitherto had the care of your education, have only taught you to read and speak with propriety: they have instructed you in the elements of some of the sciences; and enabled you to appear with an air of ease and elegance.

elegance. But *my* busines is to furnish your minds with such sentiments, as may render you worthy of the country in which you live; the rest is no more than meer varnish. When your souls are filled with the love of GOD, your King and your Country, and with a true sense of your several duties, your character will be compleat, your conduct will be exemplary: you will then give every man his due, and live in such a manner as to render virtue respectable.

THE generosity which I recommend to you, being that virtue which particularly belongs to people of quality, is not simply confined to lending or giving: it extends itself much farther, rendering the mind sensible of every thing that is interesting to humanity. What indeed can be more truly great, more worthy of your illustrious birth, than to be touched with the sight of the miseries of others? You will not

Con. IX. only sympathize with those who suffer; but you will make every one about you happy. If you have a detachment to command, you will render the soldier's duty as easy to him as you can: you will listen to his complaints; you will comfort him in his sorrows; you will be his protector and friend. Your father has often told me, that the great *Vendome* could have led his troops even into the midst of the sea; so warmly were they attached to their General. They were ready to sacrifice themselves for the sake of a commander, who treated them with humanity; and who knew how to be good to his soldiers, without being familiar with them.

Of that multitude of young persons who are ruined by extravagance, none are capable either of friendship or compassion: their life, which is a continual succession of pleasures, of debts, and embarrassments, puts it out of their power to serve  
and

and oblige others. Their vanity and their CON. IX. passions demand all they have; and besides what tends to the gratification of these, nothing more is to be expected. You will see the world filled with this sort of people; who, being distressed in the midst of large *nominal* estates, enrich only those who plunder them, or who lend them money at an extravagant interest. They insult the wretched; they despise the common people; they make a jest of the public misery: and pay attention only to the instruments of their pleasures, and the ministers of their passions.

THESE are the men, with whom you must never be connected: the company of the wicked is truly pestilential; we insensibly grow familiar with their vices, and we soon begin to imitate them. Engage virtue to find you true friends, and she will procure them for you. There are yet generous minds to be found, whom

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the world has not corrupted; and who, knowing how to distinguish betwixt the demands of fashion, and those of right reason, would rather abridge themselves, than leave the wretched without consolation and relief. We cannot, certainly, assist all who suffer; but a well dispos'd mind makes amends for this inability, by those expressions of pity and regret, which renders its generosity unquestionable.

IT only remains, that I recommend it to you not to imitate the folly of those mistaken devotees, who, to make a greater show with their alms, divide into a great number of small portions, what is scarce sufficient to relieve a twentieth part of those among whom it is distributed. By confining your benefactions within a narrower compass, you will be enabled to do more real good; you may perhaps save some distressed families from ruin: whereas alms scattered here and there are like medi-

medicines which palliate, but never heal. CON. IX.

GIVE the reins to your natural disposition, which has hitherto appeared excellent; and in the case of generosity, I know no better guide. Fear not, that you shall lessen your fortune by assisting the necessitous; we only ruin ourselves by being vicious: Virtue keeps every one within proper bounds, who is attentive to her precepts.

WHAT I have neglected to do in this respect, I charge *you* to supply; filial affection engages you to do it: and my love demands it of you in the most earnest manner, as the means of enabling me to live even after my death. You cannot but see how nearly it approaches: my eyes are already grown dim; my voice is weakened; and nothing remains to me, but that spirit which a sense of duty inspires. I will keep it alive as much as possible,

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possible, even to my latest moment, that I may omit nothing which can possibly improve your understanding, or exalt your sentiments. As an equal share of attention is due from me to all my children, I shall discourse to-morrow evening with your Sister: she is of an age to understand the language of reason; and she is so apt to learn, that I have great cause to hope my advice will not be thrown away upon her.

I am obliged to summon together all the information I have ever received, that I may be the better enabled to furnish you all with the means of conducting yourselves aright. My heart is constantly filled with anxiety on your account; it urges, it conjures me to unfold to you all that it can think of, and all that it desires to secure your happiness.

WHAT a comfort will it be to me, if Death should leave me time fully to declare

clare my sentiments to you all ! There is Con. IX.  
a wonderful difference betwixt the in-  
structions which we receive from a master,  
and the advice which is delivered by the  
mouth of a mother, whose words are,  
every one of them, expressive of the ten-  
dereſt affection. Could you but know,  
what passes in my mind every time I speak  
to you!---it appears, as if you actually re-  
ſided in my heart; and as tho' my blood,  
which can hardly any longer circulate  
through my veins, served only to be em-  
ployed for your ſupport.

No : nothing can equal the tenderness  
of ſentiment, which your preſence excites  
in my heart: I have told you ſo a hun-  
dred times; and I ſhall tell you ſo again  
and again, even to my laſt breath. The  
more ardent our affection is, the more it  
delights to repeat its tenderness and tranſ-  
ports. Alas ! every thing confpires to af-  
fect me, whenever I behold you: I fee  
your

CON. IX. your father in every line and feature :  
when you speak, it is his voice I hear.  
In short, I see my own heart represented  
in yours ; and this assures me, that when  
I shall cease to live, I shall be renewed in  
you : ah ! dismal moment of separation  
both to you and me.

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**CONFERENCE X.****Oz FEMALE CONDUCT.**

I HAVE long wished, my dear Daughter, for this opportunity of freely conversing with you on subjects of the utmost consequence to you. Your youth, the world into which you are going, the snares which it lays, and the few days which I have yet to live, all induce me to open my heart to you, and to give you some instructions relative to your dangerous situation.

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IF you could possibly entertain a doubt of my affection, the effort I am now making, when my soul is bowed down with sickness and sorrow, and sees nothing before it but the horrors of the grave, must needs convince you how earnestly I wish to secure

CON. X. CON. X. secure your happiness. My wishes will never be realized, but while you are careful to lay down proper rules for your conduct, and suffer nothing afterwards to tempt you to break through them.

IF you are so unhappy as to give yourself up to the distraction of the world, you will no longer be able to maintain the dominion over your own heart: you will live an utter stranger to yourself; and there will not be a single day, which you will know how to dispose of in a proper manner. The world is never to be satisfied; the more we bestow upon it, the more unreasonable are its demands.

YOUR sex requires the utmost circumspection; what among *men* is reputed a venial fault, is an absolute crime with us. There are a thousand things said and done in their company, which a woman ought neither to hear nor see. I would wish that a young woman should be silent and modest; and

and the world, dissipated as it is, expects  
the same. Its judgment of us is very se-  
vere; and it often fixes our character for  
life.

If you are over-solicitous to please  
others, you will run into a ridiculous af-  
fection: you must make yourself agree-  
able to every one you converse with, with-  
out letting them see that you are thinking  
about it. Nothing pleases which is not  
natural. A woman, who sets herself to  
draw the attention and admiration of all  
upon her, will soon become an arrant co-  
quette, if she is not one already.

It is only a natural and virtuous beha-  
viour, which will secure to you esteem and  
approbation: if this should not succeed, so  
much the worse for those you meet with.  
Whatever happens, this truth is indis-  
putable; that one of the brightest orna-  
ments of the sex is modesty: and that a  
young lady can never appear to greater ad-  
vantage,

CON. X. vantage, than when she is utterly divested of affectation in her behaviour.

Do not confound the ideas of modesty and timidity: the one pleases, the other distresses; we cannot avoid being hurt, when we see a young person confused and disconcerted. There is such a thing as an ingenuous confidence, which should make you not unwilling to speak, when the subject requires it; and to sing or dance, when a proper opportunity presents itself. If you are not vain, you will not be timorous to a fault.

I shall be very sorry for you, if ever vanity takes possession of your heart; for then, instead of being agreeable and communicative, you will be always unhappy in yourself, and your boldness will only serve to make you ridiculous to others. A disdainful carriage is that of a person of mean talents, and a bad heart; people of quality are less apt to assume it, than those  
of

of an inferior rank. We seldom endeavour to set ourselves off by pride, but when we have no other means of distinguishing ourselves; this is a ridiculous affectation, which the world always laughs at, but never forgives: the more humiliating our behaviour is to others, the more pleasure do they take in letting us down.

AFFABILITY will supply the want of those qualities, which you do not possess: it is the best apology that I know for little imperfections. Great allowances are always made for one, who has no pride or pretensions to superior merit: but self-love naturally raises in us an opposition to arrogance and presumption. Many women have become the subjects of satire, only by their haughty behaviour. Your figure is not without its share of elegance; and the handsomer a lady is, the more ready people are to suspect that she is vain.

THE education I have hitherto given

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you

CON. X.

you convinces me, that the toilette will not engage your chief attention; you ought to spend as much time at it, as is necessary for your decent appearance in company. We must not fly in the face of fashion, or make ourselves remarkable by our singularity: but there are certain trifles in dress, which we ought to despise. Those, which make a woman a slave to her dress, are fit only for such weak minds, as the present age, with all its attachment to levity, hath not yet learnt to esteem.

LET your hours be properly regulated; and you will find time to worship GOD, and to pursue some useful study. You will then have no imaginary complaints; and will be an utter stranger to the miseries attendant upon idleness: a life well employed is always an agreeable life.

Do not think of amusing yourself by reading romances: it is a real malady to have one's brain filled with such ideas as they

they furnish. We never see things in their true light; they give us a taste only for ridiculous extravagancies, extraordinary adventures and marvellous sentiments: we insensibly adopt the language of self-importance and affectation, and become ourselves the heroines of romance.

THE books you read should be as pure as your heart, and be reduced within a narrow compass. It is a mistake, to pretend that our sex ought to *study*. We have no offices of trust to fill, nor any dignities to be invested with; and therefore we have only need to learn what is necessary to form the mind, and improve the understanding. Almost every learned woman shews that the sciences do not belong to us: I have seldom seen one of them, that was not vain, decisive, and affected in her manner of thinking, speaking, and acting.

YOUR attention should be directed to works of ingenuity; and you should learn

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CON. X.

the best methods of regulating a family, whenever you shall be settled in the world. You may perhaps be told, that this is not a fashionable mode of education: but fashion must not be allowed to supersede duty. A woman, whose life is a perpetual round of trifles, is only fit to be made the subject of a comedy.

PRIDE persuades persons of a certain rank, that they live only to enjoy themselves. How should I be grieved, if you entertained such sentiments as these! Pleasure ought only to be considered as a relaxation from fatigue; and must always be regulated and approved by virtue. Observe this rule, and you will see what sentiments we ought to entertain of the generality of public diversions. I have so good an opinion of your understanding, as to think you would one day despise me, if I recommended them to you, as the means of giving you any solid satisfaction. If one innocent

innocent mind has been corrupted by them, that alone is sufficient to prove them dangerous; besides this, libertines speak highly enough of them, to make us suspect that they are rather of a mischievous than useful tendency.

As to cards, played merely for amusement, and under the restrictions formerly mentioned, I see not why you should totally reject them. They ruin no one, they prevent idle conversation, they promote a social intercourse; and provided you use them with moderation, this is as allowable as any other relaxation. The same may be said of music; it is with great propriety considered as an accomplishment in a lady: and is often found of great use in those hours, wherein we wish for amusement.

REMEMBER, my dear child, that an obliging behaviour is the very life of society. There is no one who is not pleased with a smiling countenance; a want of

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good humour would render you insupportable to yourself and every one about you. A reasonable soul ought always to be under the guidance of reason; the behaviour of a capricious mistress is a great discouragement to her attendants: if you would secure their affection, endeavour to deserve it.

My weakness, which daily increases, will not allow me to hope that I shall live to see you settled in the world: but it is God's will that it should be so; and to his good Providence I submit. Yet let me previously observe to you, that an amiable and obliging wife may almost always insure to herself a kind and indulgent husband. Let your affection be confined to him, whom you have engaged to love: seek only to please him, and peace shall dwell in your house. If, in spite of all your care and prudence, things should not always go smoothly on; you will find a conscience void

void of reproach, the greatest comfort in CON. X.  
the world.

Con. X.

KEEP yourself an utter stranger to intrigues; when we are faithful in the discharge of our duty, we have no need to have recourse to artifice and falsehood. The conduct of a virtuous woman never shuns the light: the more her character is enquired into, the better she is satisfied. It is a pitiable situation to live in a state of perpetual apprehension; and to have no better security against public shame than the prudence or fidelity of a domestic, whom one has made a confidant. Nothing is so dearly purchased, as the confidence of low and venal minds: be connected only with women of the strictest virtue; it is our acquaintance, which fixes our reputation.

If you should have children, do not part with them at that time, when the light of reason begins to dawn in their

## M 4. minds.

CON. X.

minds. Then it is, that the soul is capable of impressions, which can never afterwards be effaced ; then it is, that it must be filled with whatsoever can inspire it with the love of truth. How very imperfectly do they discharge the duty of a mother, who only see their children, either to admire, or to chide them ! Reflect on the conduct of the fowls of the air ; always engaged in the care of their young, they never leave them 'till they have taught them to fly. Are we less wise than these irrational creatures ? One would think, by the difference in our conduct, that reason was inferior to instinct.

WHEN you appear thoroughly impressed with a love of your duty, you will have fewer admirers of your person, than of your virtue. There is nothing more disgusting than the character of a woman, who listens only to fulsome compliments ; who-

who only lies in wait for flattery, and whose behaviour on obtaining it is truly ridiculous. A well-disposed mind treats every one with proper respect; and never loses its dignity, even when it is most familiar.

BE always upon your guard against a professed wit: he is a critic, who often does us great mischief: if he is not satirical, he is at least very forward, and his repartees are to be dreaded. Modesty is no objection to any person; and few have ever yet complained of it. To give your own opinion with diffidence, to hear that of others with attention, and candidly to defend your neighbour's reputation where it may be defended, is a sure way to be loved and esteemed.

ABHOR luxury and idleness; these two, which are the sources of many other vices, weaken and destroy the powers of the mind. Study nothing more than a deli-

cacy

CON. X.

cacy of sentiment and behaviour; speak without affectation, and write without disguise: nothing is so pleasing as the truth. The letters of Madame de Sévigné, which you cannot read too often, have never been without admirers, from their being so exactly conformable to nature; it is a sure sign of our want of wit, when we are always endeavouring to shew it.

SUCH is the advice, my dear daughter, which my own experience and my heart suggest; a knowledge of the world will supply the rest: this is a science, which never is forgotten, and which prevents our being deficient in any necessary point of behaviour.

You art doubtless surprized that, in a series of instruction, which comprehends the whole life, I should have said nothing on the subject of Religion. But you will cease to wonder, when I tell you, that I reserve a subject, so interesting to your brothers

brothers and yourself, for another conference, when I have an opportunity of speaking to you all together.

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YOUR father, whom you scarce remember, charged me to be particularly attentive to *your* education. Tho' he is no more, he ought to live continually in your heart, by a constant love of virtue; this is the best way of recalling him to your mind, and of shewing your respect for his memory.

THE hour is at hand, when you will be an orphan; but you will be in the hands of GOD; He is more especially the protector of the fatherless. In other respects, you may depend on the goodness of your uncle, whose sentiments I well know; he loves you, and he is a man of the strictest integrity. He will consider you as his daughter; and will settle you in the world, so as to make you happy. With all my heart I wish you to be so; for

Con. X. for it is impossible to love you more tenderly than I do. But enough for the present, my dear child; it is time for you to retire; and I am too much agitated by talking thus tenderly to you. Your presence excites those tears, which my grief will not suffer to break forth:--- I feel myself almost suffocated;---I would wish to recover my spirits, but I am not able:---O amiable child!---O mother, deeply afflicted!

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CONFERENCE XI.

On STUDY.

THOUGH the presence of your sis-  
ter caused in me such emotions of  
tenderness, as almost entirely overcame  
me; yet I am not willing any longer to  
defer my admonitions on the love which  
you ought to have for *Study*. I perceive  
that I am hastening to my end; and I de-  
sire nothing more sincerely than that, be-  
ing reduced to eternal silence, I may find  
a place in your remembrance. This is  
the portion of a being, who has only a  
borrowed and most precarious life.

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I shall not enter into a detail, which  
supposes a knowledge of the sciences, and  
of the learned professors of them. For  
besides that it was always my opinion that

a woman

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a woman ought not to study mathematics, or philosophy; that round of dissipation, in which I have spent so great a part of my life, has left me little more than common experience, and some remembrance of what I have heard others mention on this head.

I should imagine that you can never do better, than devote to literary pursuits the moments which are at your own disposal: a mind, which we neglect to cultivate, is like a body which we do not feed. By reading, the faculties are enlarged, the memory is strengthened, and the imagination is enriched: but the principal point is, to distinguish what is worth reading, in the midst of so many works, as are continually making their appearance in the world; this choice is a matter of real difficulty.

MR. ——, to whose merit you are no strangers, and whom I have consulted on

on this subject, is of opinion, that you should immediately have recourse to such writings, as tend to regulate the morals, and to form the mind. He advises your beginning with books of such a nature, as will furnish you with sound principles on the most important obligations of life; such as will shew you the delusions of sensual conduct, and the destruction occasioned by the indulgence of our passions; such as will elevate your minds, by making you acquainted with God and with yourselves.

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WHEN you have first taken care to furnish yourselves with virtuous sentiments, you will diligently consult such authors, as have written on the subject of your profession: it being an unpardonable ignorance not to be well acquainted with whatever is the business of our lives. Your uncle, who has been engaged in military service all his life, and who has studied

all

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all the arts and exercises of war, will be the best director in this respect; and will furnish you with the properest books on the subject: apply yourselves diligently to this study, and you will soon reap the fruits of it. A soldier, who goes on only in the beaten track, without making himself thoroughly acquainted with the nature of his business, is little better than a piece of clock-work; which must be set in motion, and never deviates from the path assigned it.

AFTER this, you will learn to know the world: BRUYERE's characters, and ROCHEFOUCAULT's maxims, will be found useful to you; in these writers you will see the portraits of all sorts of men, both in their public and private capacity.

HISTORY is another picture, which you should carefully examine: all the operations of the heart and mind are there described in the most interesting manner. Bossuet's treatise on this subject is considered as a master-piece. Books

Books of mere amusement, which do not take place till after those of instruction, are however necessary, by way of relaxation, to prevent fatigue. I know no romance worth reading except *Don Quixote* and *Telemachus*; almost all the rest are either trifling, or mischievous: fiction is seldom made use of with safety; it either serves to embellish vice, or to ridicule virtue.

IT is very proper, that you should read the best poets: poetry elevates the mind, warms the imagination, and makes us perfect in the art of expression; but care must be taken to study the poets with discretion. Prose, being less likely to seduce the mind, is more proper for young persons, who suffer themselves too easily to be imposed upon: we can never be too much on our guard against the glaring appearance of what is falsely accounted beautiful. I have known many people, whose

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taste has been spoiled by reading nothing but poetry : the rhyme seduces, the harmony of numbers bewitches ; and what is oftentimes only fiction passes for truth.

NEVER purchase books, without consulting learned and judicious friends ; and remember that it is not the number, but the choice of books, which really adorns and improves the mind. The library of a military man is large enough, if it contains two or three hundred volumes ; they who have more, either keep them for the use of others, or to flatter their own vanity. How many noblemen are there, who make no more use of their library, than of their green-house ; seldom, if ever, entering into either !

I have heard it affirmed by a celebrated writer, that almost all modern works are only copies ; and that we ought only to study such as are originals. I am sorry this author is now no more ; because he would

would have given you the best information on this head ; but you will easily meet with other learned persons, who will be ready to direct your studies. If you pursue the plan here proposed, you will divide into four classes all the books, which you have need of ; the first will include books on the subject of religion ; the second, books of instruction in your profession ; the third, those which are proper to introduce you to natural and moral philosophy ; and the fourth, books of amusement only. We seldom read to advantage, but when we pursue some method in reading.

THERE are other works, which we may run through ; such as, the daily, and periodical publications ; which may serve to give you a superficial knowlege of what is passing in the literary world ; and will prevent your being a stranger to what is talked of in company on these subjects. But always shew wisdom and discretion

N 2                          enough,

Con. XI. enough, not to confound this kind of writing with those numerous publications, which good sense and religion equally disclaim.

IMPROPER reading is the ruin of young minds; forbidden books ought to be considered in the light of evil company. Neither the style of a work, nor the name of an author, can excuse your reading either what is satirical or impure; vice is always vice, under whatever colours it presents itself. There are theatrical performances, so decent, that we may venture to go through them, and so interesting, that we cannot help wishing to do it: be prudent without affectation, and you will never have any vain scruples.

THE books, which you have hitherto read, are little more than the elements, and as it were the alphabet of science; those which you should hereafter read, ought to contain the knowlege of things, and

and sound reasoning upon them. There are different kinds of study appropriated to all ages and stations. The mind of an ecclesiastic demands a very different sort of cultivation from that of a man of the world.

THE generality of mankind are satisfied with being able to write and to speak well; but this is not sufficient for persons in your situation. Your country requires that as soldiers you should be well instructed, so as to be able to give a satisfactory reason for whatever you do: you will moreover find in study the happy secret of not being burthensome to any one; and will have a perpetual source of entertainment in yourselves.

WELL chosen books are our best friends; we find them always ready when we want them; and, when judiciously chosen, they always speak the truth to us. It is a great happiness to be able sometimes to

CON. XI. endure solitude: we must learn how to withdraw ourselves from the converse of men, as well as how to bear it. We must lay in a store of knowledge against approaching old age: by reading, we enlarge the sphere of our understanding; and we afterwards feel much greater pleasure in the midst of society. All these advantages will attend you, if you love study, and cultivate your intellectual faculties.

YOUR father---alas! I would to God, he were now supplying my place on this important subject!--your father has often told me, that in great towns a love of study preserved him from a thousand dangers, and that in little villages it served him instead of company. Be possessed of this resource; for knowledge is a treasure which no thief can steal: yet do not seek this treasure at the expence of your health.

Immoderate

Immoderate application to study exhausts the spirits, and fatigues the mind.

TAKE heed also, that learning does not make you positive or pedantic; the more men really know, the less they affect to shew it. We make every man our enemy, whom we humiliate by an affected superiority: but he, who regards his own interest, seeks to make himself friends. If it be true that ignorance is despised, it is not less true that presumptuous knowledge is generally hated: an ostentatious display of learning never succeeds.

You must not expect to find study always agreeable: like the rose, it has beauties, but is not without its thorns. The beginning of every science, as *M. de Fontenelle* observes, is difficult; and nothing but assiduity and labour will enable you to taste the pleasures of it. I should recommend it to you to devote three hours at least, in every day, to study: two in

the morning, and one in the evening. You are never to forget that you owe something to your rank in life, as well as to society ; and that it is with the soul, as it is with the body ; excessive hunger and repletion are both injurious to it ; by the one it is famished, by the other it is overloaded.

THERE is another inconvenience, in an indiscreet love of study, that it makes us too cold, and philosophical ; it makes men behave in company with an air of too much gravity, and absence ; and gives them the appearance of old men at the age of thirty. Accustom yourselves to leave your books, as we leave the company of our friends ; seem to forget them, till you take them up again. The world, perhaps, is very little interested in what you read ; so that probably what nearly affected *you* might to *them* be perfectly indifferent : every one has his own particular manner of

of considering things. Our conversation with the dead demands recollection, and application; but that which we hold with the living should be full of ease, and sprightliness.

CON. XI.

IF you are really fond of study, you will every where find an opportunity of gratifying your taste: the very grass on which you tread, and the insect which is apparently despicable will serve to display the wonders of divine wisdom. Accustom yourselves always to travel with a common-place-book; landscape, a monument, a ruin, every thing of this sort, finds a place in the journal of a person of reflection.

THE knowlege of customs and manners is another science, which deserves your attention. You will doubtless have opportunities, in the course of your profession, of seeing the different nations which surround us: war lays open every country to the observation of the soldier. You will then

Con. XI. then be able yourselves to mark the difference betwixt a Spaniard and a Frenchman, an Italian and an Englishman. But remember at the same time, that in this variety there is something not unlike the parterres of a garden; in which each flower has its merit and perfection: it is a great error, to expect that all the world should be just such as ourselves.

I have nothing more to say on this subject: my knowledge of it is very confined, and my strength too much exhausted to be able to prolong this conference. You live in an age in which you will not want for directors, if you know how to chuse them: as for me, my chief study, at present, is the contemplation of death. I perceive nothing but shades of darkness, which surround me on every side. My tender regard for you indeed serves from time to time to disperse them; and opens to my view a gleam of light, by the help of which I be-  
hold

hold you, as the delight of my soul, and the very joy of my heart. Nothing moves me, where you are not concerned; but I am immediately rouzed, when your welfare is in question, and I at once forget all my pains and infirmities.

If my attachment is too strong, God, I hope, will pardon it: for he sees the very bottom of my heart, that it has at present only one desire, viz: that you may be truly virtuous. I will not say, I would sacrifice my life, to obtain this blessing; for alas! what would that be worth, at the hands of one, who has only a few wretched hours, or perhaps minutes to live? But this is most certain, that I never yet desired any thing more earnestly, than I now wish for your happiness both in this world and the next.

I humbly hope, that God will open the kingdom of Heaven to receive me; and I trust, I shall hereafter see you with me there.

CON. XI. there. The short enjoyment, I have had  
of you upon earth, is not sufficient to satisfy my affection for you; I perceive it  
is yet too much alive to die with me.

ALAS! how much do we suffer, when  
the heart is so full of sensibility as mine is!  
But I must even divest myself of nature, if  
I would get rid of my sentiments of love  
and tenderness for my children.

C O N-

CONFERENCE XII.

*On the CLERICAL CHARACTER.*

THE disorder of this exemplary mother CON. XII.  
increasing, they despaired of her being any more able to discourse with her family: but it pleased GOD, that the symptoms abated, and her strength returned for a little while. Ever filled with the tenderest concern for her children, she embraced this opportunity of calling her son the *Abbé*, and thus addressed him:---

You, my son, have made choice of a state of life very different from that of your brothers; the advice, therefore, which I would wish to give you, ought to be personally directed to yourself. My great comfort, with respect to the profes-

sion

CON. XII. sion you have engaged in, is, that I have  
not over-ruled your choice; this encour-  
ages me to hope, that God will bless  
you in it. You have more need, than  
any other, of the gifts of heaven; be-  
cause you have more duties to discharge:  
*AN. 1800.* no instance of misconduct in an ecclesiastic  
is trifling or inconsiderable.

I am but little acquainted with divi-  
nity, or with the books which you ought  
to study: but I know that your life ought  
to be a life of application; and that if  
idleness is a fault in others in one of your  
profession it is a crime.

I know also that the books, which  
should engage your principal attention,  
are not merely books of amusement; but  
those which treat of christian perfection,  
and the means which lead us to it.  
For how will you be able to direct  
others, if you have not yourself learnt the  
way?

BE careful not to be occupied too much CON. XII.  
with secular affairs: those ecclesiastics,  
who have been so engaged, have never  
yet found it the way to procure esteem.  
They are indeed sought after, and con-  
sulted; but they are not really respected:  
we think, with reason, that their function  
should be sacred.

EXTERNALLY to renounce the world,  
and afterwards eagerly to pursue the con-  
cerns of it, is to assume a character truly  
ridiculous: the life of an ecclesiastic, im-  
mersed in worldly concerns, is incon-  
sistency itself.

I say nothing to you of your morals.  
The most unsullied virtue is so essential to  
your profession, that he who is destitute  
of it is an object of detestation in the sight  
of God and man: in spite of the cor-  
ruption of the age, a vicious priest is insup-  
portable. Even the libertine is shocked,  
when he hears of the misconduct of a per-  
son,

CON. XII. son, invested with your sacred character; all men expect, that they, who are required to set an example to others, should themselves be really exemplary.

WHAT can be more offensive, than the sight of a clerical *petit-maitre*, whose whole life is spent in ridiculous trifles? There is a certain decorum, which you cannot too scrupulously observe. I never saw an ecclesiastic, who affected to be a man of the world, that did not make himself contemptible: the company generally amuse themselves with such an one, as a bauble or a toy.

IF you would wish to be respected, your outward appearance must not contradict the nature of your profession. Let all your purposes be honourable and prudent, and all your words be the interpreters of your mind: it is a certain indication of a depravity of heart, when we are not circumspect in our conversation.

SHUN

SHUN hypocrisy, and affected singularity; your situation is too considerable to have a part to act. Appear to be such as you really are, and every one will respect you; affected manners suppose weakness or duplicity.

As for public diversions, consider them as prohibited to persons of your profession: an ecclesiastic is to be pitied, who cannot find sufficient employment and satisfaction in the duties of his function. I do not mean to exclude innocent domestic amusements among your friends, but an immoderate attendance on places of public resort; and above all things, what is called *play* in public, I look upon as criminal in a clergyman: one half of the company ridicules, while the other is offended at such behaviour; and all agree, that it tends to the injury and discredit of religion.

In your apparel, be neither careless nor

O finical:

CON. XII. finical: a graceful simplicity should distinguish a person, whose duty it is to recommend moderation to others. He, who endeavours to set himself off by an undue conformity to the world in his dress or manners, appears to be ashamed of his profession: he is a kind of amphibious creature, who being neither fit for the church, nor for the world, has something monstrous in his appearance. We are not fond of inconsistencies, either in men's outward behaviour, or in their minds: he, who is not consistent in his conduct, is like an actor on the stage.

THE fashions of the world are not designed to be adopted by priests or magistrates; the gravity of their character must be shewn in their manners, and in their dress. Impertinence is despicable in any one; in persons consecrated to the priesthood it is odious. What must one think of a clergyman running from morning 'till night,

night, from one scene of pleasure to another? The world laughs at him, religion weeps for him.

I need not say, that you cannot be too circumspect in every thing which concerns the ordinances of religion; one doctrine of which, you well know, cannot be attacked, without materially injuring the whole. A priest, who should himself be wretch enough to treat them with contempt, must be considered as one that holds himself up to ridicule and just reproach.

CONSIDER it as your duty, to frequent the society of the most learned and virtuous men: their conversation reflects light upon us; and we insensibly copy after their manners. Be cautious in your behaviour to the female sex, avoiding all offensive levity: it fares with the reputation of an ecclesiastic, as with a mirror; the smallest blemish destroys its beauty.

CON. XII. LET your library consist of the most celebrated books, and delight in reading them: an ignorant clergyman is a man, who makes sport for the public; one who dishonours religion, and whom all men despise.

RATHER be afraid, than ambitious, of heaping up benefices and dignities; at least never try to obtain them by adulation or intrigue. He, who purchases by mean compliances the highest preferments in the church, loses oftentimes his honour, if not his soul. Merit alone ought to recommend an ecclesiastic, who knows what his profession demands of him, and is disposed to conform himself to the duties of it.

BE always ready to open your heart and your purse to the truly wretched: and especially, if you are largely provided for, consider your riches as intended principally for their benefit. There is nothing so opposite to the tenor of the gospel, as a covetous

COVETOUS or ambitious priest. Your own CON. XII. patrimony will be sufficient for you, if ~~you~~ you are not addicted to luxury and excess; it is this, which almost always reduces men to poverty.

AIM at simplicity in your furniture and in every thing that is external: let your virtues be your principal ornament, and be indifferent about the rest.

LET not pride ever take possession of your heart; it is the characteristic of a weak mind, and the surest way to become hateful to others. There is no one, who is not charmed with condescension and sweetness of behaviour: but if this were not the case, how is it possible to reconcile a haughty disposition with the precepts of the gospel?

SUCH, my dear son, are the instructions, which I thought it my duty to give you; every one of them is dictated by love, and an earnest desire of promoting your

O 3                      happiness.

CON. XII. happiness. The seminary, in which you have been educated, must needs have inspired you with a love of study, and a veneration for religion. Never forget the principles there imbibed; and often reflect, that a person of your character ought only to appear in the world, for the sake of improving it. His faults are by no means confined to himself; they furnish all who see them with a pretence for strengthening themselves in their wickedness, and persisting in it.

You must remember, that the conduct of your brothers ought not to be a matter of indifference to you: your profession engages you to point out to them their duty, and to remonstrate, if you find them negligent of it. But, to give weight to your admonitions, you must set them a good example; and you must administer reproof with tenderness and discretion: reprehension is always ill received, if the severity

verity of it is not wisely tempered with expressions of affection and humility. CON. XII.

YOUR father, who was always intent on the welfare of his children, would have taken every method of enabling you to do the highest honour to that profession, which you have chosen. May GOD, who has taken him from us, be himself your conductor and guide! Cleave steadfastly to HIM, in the faithful service of whom consists all our glory and our happiness..

## CONFERENCE XIII.

## On PRIDE.

CON.XIII. PRIDE, my dear children, being frequently connected with an exalted situation in life; I think it my duty to set before you the danger of it. Be assured it is this, which hath carried every species of luxury to its present height; and hath made that the idol of almost every rank. We impoverish ourselves, merely for the sake of outward shew; and every possible shift is made to *cut a figure* in the world.

WE are anxious to conceal our common original; and that common destiny, which puts us all upon a level. We endeavour, if possible, to persuade ourselves, that a rich man is quite a different creature from the

the rest of mankind ; and there is no such CON. XIII.  
thing as real greatness in the world, inseparable from riches and honours.

THE effect of such a persuasion is, that virtue has no charms to engage our affections ; it is a shade which we avoid, that we may bask in the sunshine of fortune, whom with idolatrous veneration we adore.

WE have seen the luxury and pride, which abound at this time in our cities, begin and increase in such a manner, as to ruin the most opulent families : we have seen that simplicity exploded, which distinguished our ancestors, and rendered their manners so amiable and respectable. Their descendants very soon began to be ashamed of *their* plain attire, their humble accommodations, their venerable portraits ; nothing was any where to be seen but a profusion of expence, in building magnificent houses, in purchasg the richest dresses, and having the most costly furniture.

WHAT

CON. XIII.

WHAT extravagance do you not see, in this respect? I am sure it often astonishes you; and you are thoroughly sensible of the folly of it; and cannot but perceive, how greatly our morals suffer by it, and how bitterly virtue laments the effects of it.

WHEN we grow familiar with vanity, and make it the object of our love and pursuit, the soul is regarded as a thing of nought, and the body is in a manner idolized: We torment and even ruin ourselves, only for the sake of this; and think of nothing but dazzling our eyes with ornaments, gratifying our ears with concerts, and our taste with all kinds of meat, however luxurious and expensive.

IT is pride, which produces effeminacy, and which prevents our ever resting but on beds of down: it is continually inventing new pleasures; it enervates the mind; and renders even the stoutest men,

little

little superior to women both in their dress, and in their general turn of life.

O ! my children, place this picture often before your eyes ; and let it prevent your giving yourself up to pernicious luxury : my former propensity to this foolish vanity is the cause, why I am not better able to speak to you on the subject ; but it has also enabled me thoroughly to discover its emptiness and folly. My own reflections convince me, that we forget we are rational, or even human, creatures ; and fancy that our wealth is given us only, to procure whatever tends to the gratification of our passions. Luxury is an abyss, which swallows up the greatest estates, and which we are seldom able to fathom : the fashions which it studies, and the trifles which engage its attention, are so many occasions of our ruin.

BE truly great, and you will never be vain : you will know, that there is a certain

CON. XIII. tain propriety to be found between the two extremes of avarice and prodigality; and it is this, which ought to regulate your table, your dress, and your equipage. You will know that pride, in making us vain, renders us ridiculous; and that when this prevails, we see young men effeminately devoting themselves to the toilette, and passing half their time under the hands of the hair-dresser. You will find them as seriously engaged in determining the colour of their cloaths, the size and shape of a shoe buckle, and other such trifles, as if they were matters of the most serious importance.

IF you give yourselves up to pride, you will be slaves to these idle vanities; and you will thereby weaken the force of that manly virtue, which you naturally inherit from your worthy father.

BESIDES this, you will have every kind of whim and caprice to gratify; you will find

find numbers ready to supply your demands, CON. XIII.  
by advancing you sums of money. You  
will be told, that to be in debt is no re-  
flection upon the character of a man of  
quality; and you will be encouraged to  
multiply debts, and to ruin your fortune.  
Every day furnishes us with examples,  
which confirm this truth. How many  
persons of immense estates outlive their in-  
come; and find themselves surrounded by  
domestics, whom they cannot pay; by  
creditors, who are frequently worrying  
them: filled with remorse, which per-  
petually torments them; and reduced at  
length to a state of extreme indigence and  
necessity!

SUCH are the effects of pride; it carries  
us headlong into every kind of extra-  
gance: and presents to our view a house,  
the furniture of which is not yet paid for,  
the domestics full of discontent, and the  
master of the family himself at his wit's  
end,

CON. XIII. end, being no longer able to find creditors  
to trust him.

THESE, my dear children, these are the miseries which you must expect to suffer, if you give way to the suggestions of pride. But even supposing it did not carry you to this extremity of distress, I need not say more to dissuade you from it, than that it will tend to rob you of your virtue; make you regardless of the miseries of your neighbour, and fond of all those effeminate indulgences, and that ridiculous parade, which the world encourages, and so passionately admires.

I should not do justice to your father, if I did not observe to you, that he was generous and even magnificent according to his circumstances; yet a noble simplicity, and a prudent œconomy peculiarly distinguished his character. His uncorrupted manners rejected all those expensive trifles, which an unreasonable fondness for luxury has

has rendered fashionable : the love of his country so engrossed his affections, as to leave no room for vanity in his heart.

EVERY wise and virtuous person considers luxury as the source of all kinds of iniquity : he knows, it is in the school of pride that we learn to despise the poor, to harden our hearts, and to seek after every refinement of pleasure. We cannot bear the sight of an object that is disagreeable to behold ; we cannot breathe but among perfumes ; we cannot exist, but in the midst of softness and pleasure.

IT is a great misfortune not to be able to distinguish betwixt the superfluities and the necessaries of life ; our passions are so many tyrants, which allow us no rest 'till we have found the means of satisfying their demands. Hence we see, that those among the great, who listen to the dictates of pride, are really in a state of slavery : they are absolutely dependent on fashion,

in

Con. XIII. in the most trifling circumstance of their lives. If any article is defective in the midst of all their splendour, they are distractèd ; they lose all patience ; they appear to be so entirely taken up with external ornaments, with finery and parade, that they seem to live for no other purpose than to gratify a restless appetite for trifles.

WHEN we visit persons of this turn of mind ; we do them *the honour* to be utterly regardless of themselves, that we may give our whole attention to their furniture. We speak to them only of what is every where around them ; we attend only to that which dazzles our eyes : as if we meant to give them to understand, that if they had nothing to exhibit, more worthy of our notice than themselves, they might be contented to live in perpetual solitude.

SURELY, my dear children, there is nothing very captivating in such empty characters

characters as these; yet such is the glory of CON. XIII. those who live in subjection to luxury and pride, that they are not regarded on their own account, but merely for the sake of their table, and their show. As a proof of which, if they lose their riches, they instantly sink into contempt; it is hardly remembered that such persons ever existed. How different is the state of those, who are really virtuous! whatever misfortunes befall them, they seldom want a panegyrist or admirer, but are generally regarded and esteemed. History furnishes us with a thousand instances of persons, whose merit, without any other support, has been respected even in the lowest obscurity: such is the power and influence of truth!

WHICH of you then, my dear children, would not rather embrace a virtuous poverty, than be satiated with luxuries, and be destitute of virtue? I am persuaded, that neither of you would hesitate a

P moment,

CON. XIII. moment, in the determination of your  
choice.

If my health would suffer me to enter more particularly on the subject, I could shew you other evil effects of pride; and particularly, that it attracts to itself persons of the most trifling and insignificant character. Look at the house of such a one as I have been describing; and you will find it filled with those pretty gentlemen, whose whole life is spent in ruining their fortune and their constitution. You will find it to be the rendezvous of gamesters; (for gaming is an inseparable appendage to persons of that turn of mind, which I have been describing :) in short, luxury has there displayed her utmost charms, to ruin those very people, who are studious to support her empire in the world.

An elegant simplicity will deliver you from the society of men of such licentious conduct,

conduct, among whom virtue almost always suffers ship-wreck. Where pride prevails, religion is despised; an immortal spirit cannot accommodate herself to those perishable objects, which tend only to chain her down to the earth.

Do not imagine, that luxury is instantaneous in its growth: it has its beginning, and its progress: at first, it is no more than a desire of having our houses more elegantly furnished, or our persons more fashionably dress'd, than others of our rank. The love of fashion insensibly gets the ascendency over us; 'till we think nothing agreeable, in which there is not an air of elegance and novelty. Scarce is this first step taken, but simplicity becomes insupportable: we despise a man, whom we see indifferently cloathed; and we annex the idea of supreme felicity to idle and fantastic pleasures.

WE cannot but hold pride in the lowest

CON. XII. contempt, when we reflect, that every one of this disposition enjoys the blessings of society, without contributing any thing towards its advantage --he deprives the community of many useful members--- does not properly discharge any duty whatever---and dies, without leaving any memorial, except of the riches which he has wantonly consumed.

LUXURY engages all the world in her service: you would think there would be no artificers or manufacturers without her; and that the arts, the elements, and the seasons, must become tributary to her. This it is, which overwhelms the luxurious man with pride, and makes him believe, that he is lord of the creation.

I earnestly hope, these considerations will make a due impression on your minds. Look on her without prejudice, and you will see that the pride which is so idolized, is more transient, than the cloud which passeth

passeth away ; you will see, that there is CON.XIII.  
nothing good to be expected from a man  
enslaved to vanity, and sunk into effemi-  
nacy.

THAT swarm of *petits maîtres*, whom  
every man of sense despises, owes its ori-  
gin only to pride ; which fills them with  
the love of themselves : and thenceforth a  
new race of beings makes its appearance on  
the stage, exposing their vanity to all  
around them ; and burthening society with  
all the charges of their existence.

BUT there is another dreadful effect of  
pride ; which is, that it gives birth to  
those idle and mischievous books, which  
are continually publishing to the world :  
and which, however harmless they may  
be thought, tend to vitiate the taste, and  
corrupt the morals. How many young  
people have been utterly ruined by impro-  
per books ! If idleness and the love of plea-  
sure had not taken possession of their

CON. XIII. hearts, they would never have quitted  
that happy simplicity of manners, which  
inspires us with a love of truth, and teaches  
us to shun evil and pursue good.

THERE is yet another thing which I  
would wish to observe; namely, that you  
will insensibly lose your strength of mind,  
whenever you give yourselves up to the  
influence of pride: and what a ridiculous  
character is a soldier, dissolved in luxury,  
and totally enervated? There remains no-  
thing more of him than the shadow of a  
body; and an effeminate mind, to which  
the slightest hardship is a most insupporta-  
ble evil. Accustomed to sleep under a  
richly-decorated pavilion, to feed on the  
most delicate food, to be attended by a  
number of servants, he is either disquali-  
fied for the necessary duties of a soldier;  
or he carries to the camp a train of luxu-  
ries, which are ruinous to himself, and  
render him a bad example to others.

SURELY

SURELY, my dear children, you would CON. XIII.  
not wish to be soldiers, merely to live in  
ease and splendor: were this the case, you  
would be loaded with reproaches; and  
your pride, far from procuring you respect,  
would only bring you into contempt. A  
*petit maître* is entirely out of his place,  
when he is called into the field of battle:  
his whims, his particularities, his deli-  
cacy, all serve to render him unhappy in  
himself, and ridiculous to others. He is  
pointed at as one, who rather acts a part,  
than is really such as he ought to be.

YOUR good Father has told me a thou-  
sand times, that those fine gentlemen,  
who are taken up in admiring themselves,  
running continually from one circle to an-  
other, and absolutely devoted to the busi-  
ness of the *toilette*, were always consi-  
dered as officers of no consequence or au-  
thority, whom the meanest soldier held in  
contempt. They can dance indeed, and

Con. XIII. they can sing ; but they cannot fight : both because the art of war demands something more than mere personal courage, and because courage itself is weakened by the love of pleasure.

Look at the portraits of your ancestors ; take notice of their suits of armour. Think ye, that the delicacy of the present age would have had any charms for them ; and that they would have admired an officer scented with perfumes ? Alas ! how ingenuous are we, only to make ourselves despised !

LEAVE pride to those, who being suddenly grown rich, and struck with seeing themselves become men of consequence, and encircled with flatterers, place all their merit in gilded furniture, and splendid equipages. Neither a virtuous man, nor a man of quality, has any need of luxury to set him off. It is a great reflection on the present age to suppose, that it  
only

only esteems men according to outward CON. XIII.  
shew: he alone is indeed worthy of respect, whose character is distinguished by a noble simplicity.

BESIDES, how many real inconveniences do we suffer from this expensive turn of mind? Every part of our life favours of an uniform profusion: we are subject to a thousand forms and ceremonies; we are forced to pass our whole time in acting a part: we are surrounded by false friends, insolent servants, and almost always with anxiety, with debts and diseases.

IT is very seldom that a man, given up to pride and luxury, knows what sobriety is. Physicians have observed, that all, who live to the full, are subject to indigestions and apoplexies; and that it is this abundance, which generally shortens their lives. We no longer duly regard our conduct, than while we live in a state of sobriety: as for pleasures, they are the chief executioners of the human race. I

CON. XIII.

I thank heaven, that my health has enabled me to talk with you to-day with less difficulty than usual: you must have observed that my days are not all alike; and that oftentimes my spirits are depressed by the weakness of my body. I have now dwelt largely on my favourite subject of prudence, sobriety and moderation: and if I have appeared tedious in my reflections, impute it to that tenderness, which makes me insensible of my sufferings, and which gives me new life, whenever I am endeavouring to instruct you.

IN vain is death making daily advances on my emaciated body; in vain doth he every day rob me of a considerable part of my substance; I think myself in perfect health, while you are with me: my concern is, to know how to endure the instant of our separation. I perceive the advances which it makes; yet I find, at present, no resources in my own strength to fortify me against that affecting moment.

BUR

BUT perhaps---alas ! I only deceive CON. XIII.  
myself ; I feel nothing but death ap-  
proaching.

THE physician coming in, the children withdrew ; and gave way to those effusions of grief, which the presence of their mother had suppressed. . . . .

THE lady, having been at church in the morning, returned about eleven o'clock ; and having summoned her children, she said, "I am just come from visiting my burial place, and from looking with my dying eyes on the sepulchre of your father. O ! what pain has it given me to go through this solemn ceremony ! But I was willing to humble that pride, which conceals from us what we are ; and which will prove your ruin, if you are not careful to guard against its illusions. When we are brought up in the midst of human grandeur, it is very difficult to persuade ourselves, that we are like other

men,

CON. XIII. men, and that the brightness which surrounds us will soon be dispersed like a vapour. In the mean time what have we, whereof we can justly glory? Alas! tho' you were nobly born, you came into the world weeping, helpless, and naked; and you must go out of it not less destitute of riches and honours. In vain will the world then offer you whatever is magnificent, and flattering to our vanity: all this will pass away like a dream; and the grave will swallow up all your riches, and pride, and greatness.

IN my visit to your father's tomb, I saw nothing of all that glory which accompanied him on earth, and of all that homage which was paid him. Consigned to a little spot of ground, where silence and horror prevail, he has only a marble monument, which already begins to be effaced; and which would scarcely be seen, if we were not purposely directed to it.

Is

Is this, then, said I to myself, all that CON. XIII.  
remains of the busy tumult of the world?  
Is it to this, that nobility of birth, and  
the most brilliant fortune leads us?

YES, my children, this is the sum of all  
our expectations, as to any thing earthly.  
Whatever riches and dignities you enjoy,  
death will place you on a level with the  
meanest of our fellow creatures; it will  
reduce you to dust similar to their's, both  
in weight and value: keep then your eyes  
ever fixed on this period of human great-  
ness.

IT is this which will teach you, that  
you are nothing but frailty; and that the  
pride, which is almost inseparable from  
an exalted station, is the perfection of  
folly. Notwithstanding all the privileges  
of your birth, all your titles, and all  
your advantages, you cannot command a  
moment's existence: amidst all your gran-  
deur, you are in the power of the lowest  
men,

Con. XIII. men, of the elements which govern you, of the diseases which threaten you, and of a thousand accidents, which you cannot foresee. Your soul is as subject to sorrow, and your body to pain, as that of the meanest slave; and the poor peasant, whom perhaps you despise, enjoys the same sun, the same climate with yourself, and has the same faculties of sight, and taste, and perception.

WHY then, my children, should such a difference be made betwixt persons alike in so many respects? Is it, because there is such a disparity in their birth? No: every one knows, that we all have one common father, that our origin is from the earth; and that many a man owes his eminence of station to instances of meanness, if not of downright wickedness.

Is it, because they are confined to live by the labour of their hands? In this they only fulfil the obligation universally laid upon

upon mankind. Is it, because they are Con. XIII.  
meanly cloathed? Alas! what objects of  
pity are we, if we value ourselves upon  
being covered only with the spoils of brutes  
and insects.

WHAT connection is there, betwixt  
that filk which is the produce of a worm,  
or that gold which we dig out of the  
bowels of the earth, and an immortal  
spirit? Surely we cannot make that splen-  
dor, which is only borrowed, the subject  
of pride and vanity. The poorest of our  
fellow creatures hath a body, a soul, and  
a spirit, as well as we; from whence we  
ought to conclude that he is our brother:  
and that we are much inferior to him, in  
spite of all our grandeur and ambition, if  
he has more virtues, or nobler sentiments,  
than ourselves.

HENCE learn, that you ought never to  
despise any one; and that he, upon whom  
you look down with disdain, may perhaps  
be

CON. XIII. be endued with a more generous mind than  
all those great men of the world, who,  
while they value themselves on account of  
their superiority, are really objects of pity.  
How many are there, who, if they had  
an opportunity of shewing their abilities,  
would, by their genius and attainments,  
eclipse those men of fortune, that look  
down upon them with disdain! And  
whom the patronage of one man of rank,  
or one fortunate circumstance, might have  
raised to that degree of honour to which  
their abilities entitled them!

IT is therefore neither obscurity of birth,  
nor poverty, which lowers us in the eye  
of reason; but it is pride: because there  
is nothing which is in reality so abject, as  
this vice and its effects. It is always an  
indication either of a mean spirit, or a cor-  
rupt heart. How can we despise others,  
without casting at the same time a re-  
flection on ourselves? But were this not the  
case;

case; what I pray you, do you think we lose of our riches or our quality, by receiving with a gracious air all who approach us, and by addressing ourselves with condescension to our inferiors?

ALAS! the man, who is foolishly puffed up with a sense of his own importance, loses every thing by his haughty air, and his imperious mode of behaviour: for he loses the confidence and esteem of mankind, which is the most valuable possession in the world.

MEN of inferior rank are generally a match for those among their superiors, who treat them with contempt; for they are scarcely out of their sight, before they ridicule their whims and pride, and make them the subject of their pleasantry and satire.

O! my children, if ever you should despise the least of your brethren, if ever you should treat them with disdain, you

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would

CON. XIII. would dishonour the memory of your father. He never thought himself great, but when it gave him an opportunity of obliging others; and in him the weak and indigent found kindness and relief. He removed their sorrows; he answered them with gentleness: and if he found himself constrained to refuse them what they asked, he plainly shewed how much concern it gave him.

REMEMBER, that your elevated station stands in need of the assistance of men of inferior rank to support it; and that, if you had not people in subjection to your commands, you would lead a life of the most dreary solitude, and of extreme indigence. Some labour to supply you with food, others offer you their personal service; and it is their presence and assiduous attendance which forms your train, and renders you an object of public notice.

WE

WE are therefore enemies to our own interest, when we despise those, on whom we are so dependent for assistance. The generality of great men are respected only, in proportion to their retinue; so that they owe almost all their consequence to the very persons, whom they do not regard. O! how happy is it for us, when we know how to do justice to ourselves; when we have judgment enough to estimate ourselves according to our real worth!

NOTHING can be more dreadful than this arrogance of mind; which, carrying a man beyond the limits of an earthly being, renders him the scourge of every one about him. Might not you, my children, have been born the children of a peasant, or mechanic? And if this was not your lot, can you assume any merit to yourselves on this account? As to mental endowments, however penetrating, or ex-

CON-XIII. tenfive you may suppose them, they are no more than a glimmering light, too often ready to mislead you: and which frequently shines only at the expence of sound wisdom. Men of the greatest genius often commit the greatest faults: where wit is predominant, discretion is seldom found.

THE more closely a man examines himself, the more ready he will be to acknowledge his weakness and infirmity. It is only with respect to our immortal part, that we are truly great: but in order to deserve this character, we must be raised above our passions, and especially above pride. It is a vice which we ought not to know, except that we may avoid it: it marrs our best actions; and leaves to him, who is possessed of it, nothing but what is mean and ridiculous.

ONLY observe the man, who is wrapt up in himself, and is full of the admiration

tion of his equipage and his gaudy CON. XIII.  
cloaths; and you will perceive a degree  
of emptiness in him, which you cannot  
but pity. The poor vain creature labours  
for no other purpose, than to make him-  
self contemptible; while only a smile or  
an obliging look would conciliate the af-  
fections, and win the hearts of all, with  
whom he converses. An air of affability,  
and a word of kindness, are sufficient to  
gain a thousand praises, and a thousand  
thanks. From which you may conclude,  
that every man of quality, who incurs the  
hatred of others, thro' the neglect of that,  
which would cost him so little, either a  
look, or a word, or an air, is in effect a  
dupe to his own pride, and really a very  
despicable being.

O! my children, to whatever rank for-  
tune may hereafter raise you, never forget  
to shew a pleasing condescension in your

CON. XIII. whole deportment. Men generally vow vengeance against those, who think themselves raised above their fellow-creatures, only to aggravate the miseries of the wretched; to overwhelm them with the weight of their pride; to make them the sport of their capricious humour; to oblige them to a painful attendance in ante-chambers, where they are wearied out with impatience and disgust. Every species of greatness, which is thus assuming, is nothing better than absolute tyranny.

To one who contemplates, as I do at present, the majesty of God, how foolish as well as criminal doth the pride of man appear! How sensibly should I be afflicted, if I foresaw, that you would hereafter behave yourselves with insolence, and become distinguished by your haughty and imperious deportment! But I am persuaded, this will not be the case: you will

will rather endeavour to imitate the courtesy Con. XIII.  
and affability of your father. And I trust  
you will acquit your mother of arrogance,  
if she should venture to urge her own ex-  
ample, as not unworthy of your imitation  
in this respect.

HEAVEN, which knows my most secret  
thoughts, knows that I desire neither  
riches nor honours for you: if ye are only  
good men, you will be always sufficiently  
great.

O! my beloved children, if you could  
penetrate into my inmost thoughts, you  
could not doubt of my sincerity; I con-  
sider this union of hearts, as the only  
means of being always together. Death  
may indeed destroy the body, but it has  
no power over our affection: this is my  
comfort, when the idea of our approach-  
ing separation depresses my spirits. It is  
then, I have recourse to my intelligent

CON. XIII. and immortal principle; in whose love and affection, as it were in a sanctuary, you are to live for ever, and make part of my happiness. It is then I console myself with reflecting, that I shall not be absolutely deprived of you; but that in spite of all the ravages of death, I shall retain you in my mind and my affections. The triumph of the cruel tyrant will only be partial: under this persuasion that our union is indissoluble, wonder not that my prayers to GOD are incessant, that he would preserve you, and pour down his choicest blessings upon you.

THE more I think of you, the more I find myself interested in all that you have, and do, and are; and it is this, which heightens my affection to an inexpressible degree, that you are my own flesh and blood. What stronger motive can there be, most tenderly to love you?

I may

I may truly say, I forget almost every CON. XIII.  
other thing for your sakes: scarcely any  
thing, except my children's welfare, hath  
any longer a place in my heart. It is na-  
tural therefore for me, to avail myself of  
the little time I have to remain upon earth,  
by seeing as much of you as possible.

EXCUSE me, I pray you, to my friends,  
when I am departed hence. Tell them,  
that the duties of a parent so far surpassed  
every other, that I confined my attention  
entirely to my family; to give ease to my  
mind, and discharge my last duties. Af-  
sure them, that they had nevertheless a  
share in my regard; and that the remem-  
brance of their kindness dwelt on my mind  
to my latest moment. Thank them for the  
attention, which they have ever shewn me;  
and which, I am very sensible, was more  
than I deserved.

THE sad commission, which I am giv-  
ing you to deliver to my friends, is like  
conversing

CON. XIII. conversing with you after my death: e're  
long, you will hear your mother spoken of,  
as a shadow that is departed; you will then  
recollect all my tenderness, and do justice  
to my love.

CON-

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C O N F E R E N C E XIV.

*On FRIENDSHIP.*

I EXPECT the return of every evening, Con.XIV. with all the impatience that can be conceived. Neither the temporary relief of medicines, nor the chearing light of the sun, affords me any consolation ; nothing can do this, but the happy opportunity afforded me of seeing and conversing with you. You will hardly believe, that I reckoned every hour of the last night ; only grieving that they did not pass with greater expedition, in order to hasten this pleasing interview. Surely my tenderness for you exceeds the bounds of reason ; otherwise I could not presume, in my present situation, to wish, that the time should pass with more rapidity than it

CON. XIV. it does, when so very little remains for  
me: but let us improve that little; and let  
us discourse this evening on the necessity  
of prudence in the choice of Friends.

IF we are right in saying that a true  
friend is a treasure; we may be equally  
sure, that a false one is a monster. He  
abuses the confidence we place in him, to  
our injury; and makes sport of the affec-  
tion, which we shew him: there are hy-  
pocrites in friendship, as well as in re-  
ligion.

BUT there is nothing, my children,  
more agreeable or useful to mankind, than  
friendship: without this, the happiest life  
leaves a vacuum which can never be  
filled. There are a thousand cases, in  
which we have need of counsel or assist-  
ance; a thousand situations, in which  
we derive comfort from the sight of a  
friend: he is a support, in our adversity;  
a *Mentor*, to recall our wandering steps.

GEN-

GENTLENESS of manners, and a compliance of disposition, will secure to you all the blessings of friendship: but if you are not upon your guard against external appearances, you will run the risque either of having false friends, or of having no friend at all.

YOUR choice must not be determined either by an agreeable countenance, or a lively turn of conversation, or a brilliancy of wit; we are often ensnared by these exterior accomplishments. But experience will teach you, that there is nothing so deceitful as words and looks.

You must penetrate into the very soul of him, whom you wish really to know: if you listen only to the public voice, you will find your judgment equally divided betwixt satire and panegyric, and you will not know which side to take. I never knew a person, who had not his share of good and evil report. While some commend

CON. XIV.

CON. XIV. commend him, others blame him ; and it  
is almost always prejudice, which determines both the one and the other.

BUT how, you will ask, shall we get at the heart of him, with whom we seek to be united in friendship ? Your own understanding will teach you the way : that will make you attentive to those words and actions, which are purely natural, and unpremeditated ; and which unfold the inmost recesses of the heart. That will teach you to watch the prevailing inclination of the person, whom you wish to take into your bosom ; and to attend to his different pursuits, and connections : that will shew you in the mirror of the mind, I mean the eyes, whether there be sweetness, anger, or pride in him.

IT is easy to study others, when we have been accustomed to study ourselves ; but unhappily this self-enquiry is too much neglected. We read, with eagerness,  
books

books on every subject; but we do not Con.XIV.  
give ourselves the trouble to search into  
that instructive volume, the human heart:  
thus it deceives us every moment; and  
makes us pay dearly for our negligence in  
this matter.

BUT, how great advantages would arise  
from this enquiry! We should know the  
origin of all the evil, that we do; we  
should learn by what means our prevail-  
ing passions are most easily attacked; and  
we should have none but real friends.

LIBERTINES and gamesters have those  
qualities, which would only serve to ruin  
us. Not to mention, that they are levity  
and inconsistency itself; they communi-  
cate a love of vice, and take a pleasure in  
making proselytes, like themselves. Every  
vicious man seeks to justify his conduct by  
the authority of others; and this he hopes  
to effect, by making converts: as if it  
were in the power of a multitude to

determine

CON. XIV. determine virtue to be vice, or vice virtue.

: It is not in the circle of irregularity, or in the lap of pleasure, that you will meet with minds susceptible of true friendship : for she is prudent and discreet ; and young men enslaved to their passions are intemperate and precipitate. You need not see them more than once, to know them thoroughly : they commend nothing but pleasure ; they admire nothing but dissipation ; they speak of nothing but what is injurious to religion and morality ; all which are the strongest arguments against the admission of such persons into your friendship.

If you should make choice of one that is fond of play, he would soon persuade you, that his passion is a certain resource against dullness and misfortunes ; that the gaming table is the rendezvous of the best company ; that it is very agreeable

to

to make such great interest of one's money ; 'till, in short, he prevails, and you are undone. Connect yourself with a man of pleasure, and he will tell you there is no happiness but in sensual gratifications ; and in the end will pervert your understanding, and corrupt your affections : one insensibly becomes wicked, by conversing with such as are wickedly disposed ; this is an opinion, which is confirmed by reason and sad experience.

AN ill-disposed friend involves us in every kind of misfortune ; and the wounds which he gives us are so much the more dangerous, because he often goes down with us into the pit which he has digged for us. His kindness ensnares us ; and though we see we are the dupes of his folly, we have no longer resolution to oppose it.

I have already exhorted you to leave the choice of your friends to virtue, which

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will

Con. XIV. will preserve you from these dangers. She is intelligent without suspicion, and has the best means of discovering the truth; such a choice is too important to excuse our inadvertency and neglect.

How many are there, whose fortune or whose virtue would have been ruined, had it not been for the assistance of a friend! He becomes their guide; he shews them a safe and easy way, and his directions are attended with the most happy effects. We easily suffer ourselves to be persuaded, when it is friendship that speaks: she knows the dispositions of the heart, and discovers herself, in spite of every cloud and every impediment.

How happy will you be, if ever you are blest with a real friend! He will be a living book, in which you may read your duty; and your own affection being joined with his, there will be only one mind, and one will betwixt you. When we are united

united by generous sentiments, we mutually encourage each other to every thing that is good: there is something sacred in friendship, when it is animated by virtue.

CON. XIV.

BUT we must not expect to find true friends, if we do not use our utmost endeavours to deserve them: there is nothing more common than to hear people complain of the scarcity of friends, and nothing more rare than to see them studious to cultivate friendship. We are not apt to think, that friendship is a commerce, which must be carried on at a mutual expense.

Do not accustom yourselves to call any man your friend, whom you have not proved, and whom you do not know to be such: be honest, sincere, and agreeable yourselves; and I will be answerable for it, that the blessings of friendship shall be your's. We form connections too hastily, to have real friends; and we

CON. XIV. change them too often, to know their value: there is too much levity to be met with every where, and only the shadow of friendship to be seen.

WHAT a dismal state is it, to wander about the world, without a creature in whom we can safely confide! to live always in reserve with those, whom we converse with. A true friend delivers us from this restraint: he is of more value to us, than all the world without him, While we see, and converse with him, we think of nothing that is removed at a distance from us.

I myself experienced the blessing of a friend, in one, whom Providence threw in my way, when I was young: her advice, and her excellent virtues first began to shew me the folly and vanity of a dissipated life. I trust her goodness towards me has not failed of its reward! Were she now alive, she would supply my place

place to you : my eyes have a thousand CON. XIV.  
times bestowed the tribute of a tear upon  
her ; and to my latest breath, I shall not  
cease to regret her loss.

IT was in the friendship of this excel-  
lent woman, that I learnt to raise my  
mind above the trifles of the world ;  
and found by experience that our hap-  
piness chiefly depends on the choice of a  
friend.

INDEED, my children, a virtuous per-  
son, to whom we can at all times with  
safety unbosom ourselves, is of more  
use to us, than either books or conversa-  
tion ; when we are agitated by our pas-  
sions, we seek an asylum in his breast, and  
find that tranquillity, which we so much  
want.

ONLY make your observation on two  
faithful friends ; listen to them, and you  
will find in their language and their sen-  
timents a degree of candour and benevo-

CON. XIV. lence that will charm you. If they descend on the emptiness of earthly honours, it is the voice of reason ; if they give an account of their affairs, it is done with the utmost openness and integrity. They adhere closely to the dictates of virtue ; the stronger supports the weaker ; the wiser instructs the more ignorant ; each is content with his own measure of knowledge : and in this little society, neither wishes to have the pre-eminence.

I should not say so much on the subject of friendship, if it were not so absolutely necessary in human life. Of what service may you find a friend, amidst the perils of war ! It is very possible that he may save your life ; we see instances of it every day : your uncle can inform you, that after a bloody battle, he was found fallen among the dead ; and that the Count de \* \* \*, instigated by friendship, came to see if there were any signs of life

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in him, and delivered him from the hands CON. XIV  
of those who were preparing to bury him.

You are now arrived at a proper age to think of making such friends : a friendship, begun in our youth, is a band not easily to be broken. Experience will teach you, that the generality of persons, whom you meet with in the world, are only fit for the intercourse of common civility ; and that the number of those, among whom a friend is to be chosen, is very small. Let this choice be directed by reason, as well as the affections ; and you will never then have cause to repent of it.

We are never more sensible of the true value of a friend, than when we labour under any sickness or misfortune. The courtier passes by, and does not remember that he ever saw you ; the man of the world sends to enquire after you, and proceeds no farther : but the real friend risques every thing, nay, quits every

CON. XIV. thing, to assist and comfort you. He divides himself, he multiplies himself; he knows no greater pleasure than in opening his heart, and discovering the sincerity of his affection: we are always ready to disclose our hearts, when we have nothing but virtues to shew.

HEAVEN grant, that these reflections may imprint on your minds those sentiments, which friendship inspires. This is the wish of your best and dearest friend, who delights in seeing you; whose heart is transported with pleasure in conversing with you! I am already absolutely dead to the world; it is only in you, that I seem to live and breathe. O! my too tenderly beloved children! to what an orphan-state are you now about to be reduced! Where are the persons, whom you will hereafter call by the sacred name of friends! How happy should I be, to know them! How extremely dear would they be-

be to me ! I should consider them, as sup- CON. XIV.  
plying my place in your affections. I should conjure them to be for ever at-  
tached to you ; both out of tenderness for  
you, and compassion for me.

ALAS ! my whole soul is disordered by  
such reflections as these : all my thoughts  
are thrown into confusion. And nothing  
remains to me, but the pain of losing you ;  
a pain, which has yet a mixture of plea-  
sure, even while it overwhelms me : and  
which, indeed, I would not but feel, for  
all the world.

THAT ever I should be destined to ex-  
perience such a contrariety of sensations !  
My heart seems to be divided, and my  
soul is in a state of distraction ; my ten-  
derness is agitated at the same time by  
sentiments of a quite different nature :  
what a strange situation ! My love of my  
children, whilst it heightens my joy,  
embitters

CON. XIV. embitters my sorrow. If my affection is  
properly returned by you, I shall have  
abundant reason to be satisfied: yet do  
I still lament your fate.

*to her CHILDREN.*

**C O N F E R E N C E X V.**

*On the COURT.*

**A**S it is my design to give you some CON. XV. instructions in relation to every circumstance of your life, I think I ought to say something to you on the subject of the Court. The spot, which you will have occasion most frequently to visit, is the most respectable part of the kingdom, as being the residence of the sovereign. There it is, that the hearts of all his subjects should be fixed ; thence it is, that favours and benefits are wont to flow.

BUT you must know, that, self-love and our own interest being the first mover almost in every action, they who frequent the court are carried thither by motives of ambition, and a thirst for promotion : this

is

CON. XV. is the center, to which every thing tends.

It is here that the vehemence of desire, and the flame of passion are kindled : here it is that courtiers pine away with envy and impatience ; and there is scarcely any one, who does not feel himself in an uneasy situation. One is afraid of losing his place, another is apprehensive that he shall get nothing ; and as neither of them will venture to utter his real sentiments, either that he may not expose himself, or that he may not reveal his secret, they both live in a state of perpetual dissimulation.

THIS accounts for our finding more suspicion and mistrust at court than anywhere else ; and hence it is, that it is the place in the world in which men are least apt to express their thoughts and inclinations. When this precaution does not exceed the bounds of prudence, we cannot but commend it ; but when it degenerates

nerates into duplicity, it is doubtless a CON. XV.  
very great fault.

EXPECT then to find, within the precincts of a court, only persons of very great prudence or dissimulation; and to see only looks, whose meaning you cannot understand. They often laugh, when they have great cause to weep; and sometimes weep, when they have occasion to rejoice. They publicly praise their enemies, if they happen to be favourites at court; and they censure even their friends, if they chance to be out of favour. Fortune is the compass by which the course of their friendship is directed; the thermometer, which shews the degree of warmth or coolness, with which people are to be addressed.

You will see, that neither openness nor freedom are the current coin of this place; and that the only way to maintain your ground there is to pay a proper respect

CON. XV. *spect to all, but to place confidence in none : never to say the least evil of any, because the weakest has power to hurt ; to confine yourselves within your proper sphere ; and to have nothing to do with intrigues or cabals.* To ask no favours, or at least to use the utmost discretion in asking them ; to give no occasion either for panegyric or satire. Equally to avoid the haughty appearance of pride, and the mean artifices of flattery ; to preserve at all times an evenness of temper, and never to shew too much sensibility. People are apt to mistrust a man of wit and humour ; they suppose that he is always designing ; and they suspect, that what he says is not sincere.

LAY down these maxims for the direction of your conduct ; and I will venture to assure you, that whatever dangers may attend the court, it will have none to ensnare you. It is not the path of ambition,

tion, which I am pointing out to you, but that of an honest man ; who seeks to get the better of his own faults, and only aspires after true happiness. The ambitious man hazards all for all : if his exaltation may render him conspicuous, his fall may be utterly destructive to him. Whereas with virtue, and a generous moderation, we leave fortune to act as she pleases ; neither coveting her favours, nor dreading her frowns.

It is doubtless a very pleasing situation to be honoured with the confidence of a royal master, and to be employed in his name to partake of the concerns of government. But how much trouble and disappointment must you expect, before you arrive at such a post of honour ? And what perpetual inquietude must you suffer to maintain it ! You will not have a moment, that you can call your own ; your time must be wholly devoted to public

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CON. XV. lic affairs : and you must be intent on  
justifying the choice which your sovereign has made of you, by incessant industry, and by an unwearied anxiety for the general welfare.

I have seen enough of the court, and of the manner of courtiers, to be able to assure you, that no one there is happy, but he who desires nothing. Is it not a sufficient honour and privilege to be permitted to approach our prince; to be known by him, and to have it in our power to shew by our assiduity, how much we love him, and how desirous we are to serve him?

WHEN we are only engaged in consulting the interest of our King, we find a court the residence of true greatness and virtue; but when we think only of our own interest, we find there nothing but intrigues, and jealousy, and dissimulation. It is not the sovereigns, or their family,

family, which render the court a place of CON. XV.  
danger ; but the faulty passions which we  
carry thither, and which an ambitious de-  
fire of advancement puts in a state of fer-  
mentation. A prince cannot see every  
thing himself ; and as the greatest part of  
his courtiers are accustomed to disguise,  
his court does not appear to him such as  
it really is.

You must above all things beware of  
learning there that political refinement,  
which has not the least connection with  
truth ; that fondness for luxury, which  
plunges us into idle expences ; that effe-  
minacy, which enervates both the body  
and mind ; that haughtiness of spirit,  
which knows no pleasure but that of de-  
pressing others. A good disposition will  
imitate nothing but virtues ; bad examples  
serve only to render it more circumspect  
and attentive to its duty.

IF it be true, that a court has its in-  
conveniences, it is no less true that it

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has

CON. XV. has also great advantages : it is the centre of true politeness ; it is the residence of the purest language ; a certain mode of behaviour there prevails, which is not elsewhere to be found, and which characterises persons of quality. It is there we become acquainted with the necessary forms, and what is usually called *etiquette* : the manner of behaving ourselves with gracefulness, and of expressing ourselves with propriety ; of receiving others with dignity, and of writing with elegance and ease. You will not have continued there long, without learning the art of being polite without impertinence, reserved without stiffness, steady without rudeness, and grave without affectation. Courtiers say many things in few words : they know every thing, yet pretend to know nothing ; that is, they are so guarded, that you can neither guess what are their real sentiments, nor quote their authority for what they say.

CHOOSE

CHOOSE those characters for your examples, which are most generally esteemed: there are always to be found at court, venerable peers, whose company is the school of honour and integrity; respectable ladies, whose example is a lesson of virtue. These are the persons, to whom you will do well most intimately to attach yourselves: you will gain their good will by listening to them with attention; by frequenting their company; by a well supported conduct, and by modesty and discretion. The court is only dangerous to those, who give themselves up to pleasure or ambition; we can every where find bad examples, when we give ourselves the trouble to look after them.

IF you should have a place at court, you will do well to remember that it is only borrowed; and be always ready to resign it: this will be the surest means of confirming you in it, and of securing you from any fear of revolutions. Courts are

CON. XV. like ground that is undermined : when we think ourselves most secure, we are in the most imminent danger of falling in.

IF you only appear there to pay the respect; which is due from you ; if you are only anxious to procure esteem ; behave yourselves with politeness to all whom you converse with : and above all things avoid the character of news-mongers, or banterers ; the least degree of raillery is always ill received. The court is the residence of extreme discretion ; they are always talking there, without affirming any thing.

THERE is no place in the world in which there is more wit ; and in which it is more dangerous to shew it. Shew nothing there but plain good sense ; that, you will find, is the way to commit no faults, and to have no enemies : we cannot be too circumspect, when we live in the midst of a world, in which every thing is seen, and every thing is blazed abroad.

NEVER

NEVER boast that you have interest, if CON. XV.  
fortune should give it you: either you  
will be beset by dependents, whose appli-  
cations you must refuse, and which a good  
heart suffers greatly in refusing; or you  
must be always asking favours, and there-  
by weakening your own interest.

AVOID the society of intriguing wo-  
men; they almost always ruin those,  
whom they appear to protect. Their coun-  
sels seduce; they fan the flames of ambi-  
tion; and all they aim at is to form par-  
ties, of which you will at length become  
the victim.

PAY no regard to the friendship, which  
they profess for you, or to the questions,  
which they will not fail to ask you. Their  
friendship may be sincere, but it may per-  
haps be infidious; and in a matter of  
doubt, prudence prescribes, that we steer  
clear of danger. There are too many jar-

CON. XV. ring interests at court, to allow us to think  
that people there are disinterested.

WHAT I am now recommending to you is not craftiness, but prudence; you will not be less the friends to truth, for knowing how to hold your peace, and act with reserve: it is a kind of policy which religion allows, and which it calls by the name of discretion.

WE find fault with the court, as being the region of toilsome attendance and fatigue; and not without reason, when we give ourselves up to idleness and pleasure. But if you are fond of reading, and make temperance the rule of your conduct; you will find yourselves as happy there, as in any other place. Satiety belongs only to those who pursue sensual pleasures alone, and who wish to be always enjoying them: let *your* happiness center in your own minds, and it will always then be at your command.

BUT

BUT enough, my children, on this CON. XV.  
subject ; experience will teach you the  
rest : she is an admirable instructress ; and  
it is to her I refer myself, every time I  
converse with you. But it is impossible  
for you to conceive what agitation my  
mind sustains, while I am giving you these  
directions for your future conduct. I can-  
not help wishing to look into futurity,  
that I might know whether the counsel  
which I give you is exactly such as will be  
of use to you hereafter ; or whether you  
will be disposed to follow it at all. I am  
always thinking, and therefore it is no-  
wonder that I am incessantly repeating,  
how dreadful is the situation of that mo-  
ther, who wishes to attend her children  
through their whole life, but is obliged  
to leave them : who is earnestly desirous to  
know in what manner they will hereafter  
conduct themselves, and what will become  
of them ; and yet cannot, with all her

CON. XV. efforts of foresight and tenderness, go one  
~~~~~ step beyond the present hour.

IT is a melancholy reflection, that I am at this time anxious to give you advice for the regulation of a life, which perhaps will very soon be taken away from you. Who knows, alas ! but that the first campaign may carry you off, in the midst of all your hopes ; and in the flower of that youth, of which you are at present in the full enjoyment. Some unexpected accident may perhaps open *your* tomb, almost as soon as mine is shut. Such are the sad reflections, which distract my mind ; arising doubtless, in part, from the increasing weakness of my outward frame. They hang over me like a thick cloud, which I am unable to remove.

To my own lot I am no stranger ; my present solicitude arises from my ignorance what will be yours. When death shall have exerted all its power upon me ; no more

more shall I be tormented with these melancholy thoughts, which cast down my soul, and fill me with disquiet.

HEAVEN has ordained, my children, that I should be taken away from you at a time, when I am deeply impressed with a sense of my duty, and am exceedingly desirous to discharge it. Alas ! how many mothers are there, who live in perfect indifference about their children ! how many mothers, who only regard their pleasures ; while I have this great reason for wishing to live, that I might be of use to you : and that I might be instrumental in preserving you from those dangers, to which your youth is about to be exposed !

GRIEVOUS indeed was the stroke, when it was the will of heaven to deprive you of your father ; it now seemeth good to the same unsearchable wisdom, to double your affliction. Submit therefore in all humility to that dispensation, which not

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CON. XV. the most costly sacrifices, nor all that your  
~~~~~ affection could possibly prompt you to be-  
stow, will be able to avert.

BUT, what do I say? you may perhaps imagine, that the prospect of death disquiets me; whereas death hath utterly lost its sting. You will not I hope suspect, that I am unwilling to submit to the will of Providence, all whose designs I humbly and reverently adore. Pardon, gracious Lord, the expiring efforts of parental affection; which overcomes me, in my present state of languor and decay.

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CONFERENCE XVI.

*On the LOVE of TRUTH.*

THE subject of this evening's con- CON. XV.  
versation shall be that infallible char-  
acteristic of a generous mind, the Love of  
Truth. You cannot but know, that no  
thing is more detestable than falsehood ;  
and that whoever deviates from truth is  
held in utter contempt.

BE assured, my dear children, you  
will no longer be esteemed, than while  
you strictly adhere to truth. The world,  
corrupt as it is, never yet spoke of a liar  
with respect ; it even protests against those  
flattering compliments, which lead us  
to commend those that are unworthy of  
praise : so certain is it, that truth is al-  
ways

CON. XVI. ways acceptable, and that her rights are  
never to be invaded with impunity.

WHAT would you say of me, my children, if you found that the affection, which I profess to bear towards you, was all dissembled ; and that my words were the language of imposture : that the regret which I have expressed at being removed from you, and seeing you no more, was merely the effect of artifice and insincerity ? Doubtless you would be offended to see me trifle with truth, and prostitute parental affection. But be assured, the contrary is true ; each word, that I utter, is the dictate of sincerest love : nor do I think it necessary to justify myself in this respect.

ALAS ! of what use would it be to me, to assume the character of an anxious or afflicted mother ? This would be far enough from giving you pleasure ; nor  
can

can I have the least interest in imposing CON. XVI.  
upon you. If I wished to do it, in order  
to make myself of some consequence in  
the world, death is about to remove me  
from it; and I have nothing here below  
to expect, but the stroke it is about to  
inflict.

CONSIGNED in a very short time to  
the regions of eternal silence, I shall nei-  
ther know what is said, nor what is  
thought of me. None of the concerns  
of this life will any longer affect me, ex-  
cept perhaps the love which I bear you;  
and which will, I hope, be perfected in  
endless joy, on seeing you again, received  
into the regions of eternal life.

THAT truth, which is so amiable and  
conspicuous upon earth, is no other than  
an emanation from, and as it were the  
image of, the Deity: and the reason why  
we hold it in such high estimation is, be-  
cause we know that it proceeds from hea-  
ven.

CON. XVI. ven. How great is its beauty, how clear its light, when it penetrates the heart and soul! From the moment of its entrance, the mind becomes the seat of equity and candour: all writings, which are destitute of truth, are calculated only to mislead; all men, who disregard it in their manners or discourse, are objects of our pity or contempt.

LET truth then be the guide of your conduct, the first principle of your actions, as hereby a very material point will be gained: you will not then suffer yourselves to be seduced by evil customs, or bad companions: your character will not then be marked by dissimulation and duplicity; your words, and looks, and actions will be uniformly true.

You have happily chosen those stations in life, in which truth is more particularly indispensable: a soldier without the strictest honour, and an ecclesiastic without

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the most rigid veracity, are men so truly Con.XVI.  
infamous, that they are looked upon with  
indignation. Honesty knows but one kind  
of language. When we have recourse to  
equivocal expressions, we no longer de-  
serve to be esteemed strictly honest: we  
are not indeed obliged always to speak all  
kinds of truth; but we are never allowed  
to say any thing, which is not true.

IT is because men are too apt to lose  
sight of these maxims, that the world is  
full of flattery and insincerity. You may  
observe, that unfortunately there seems to  
be a kind of emulation in the art of de-  
ceiving one another; and that almost in  
every company the shocking custom is but  
two prevalent, of praising people to their  
faces, and censuring them the moment  
their backs are turned. This species of  
treachery has always been exceedingly of-  
fensive to me; especially because the party  
so treated, being absent, is unable to de-  
fend

fend himself: it is cutting a man's throat, without allowing him the possibility of crying out for succour.

YOUR father, whose example I always propose to you with pleasure, because I well knew his excellent qualities; your father, I say, had an utter abhorrence of liars and evil-speakers. He considered them as birds of prey, which only seek to surprize and devour: the liar lays his snares, the slanderer stabs you with a dagger.

Ο! how amiable is truth! her empire ran parallel with the Golden Age: the tongue was then the faithful interpreter of the heart; then mutual love prevailed, and each party expressed it without disguise. The world, as it grows old, grows more corrupt; the very nature of truth is changed; and falsehood too often dwells on the lips even of those, who have had every advantage of education. What

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in fact are all idle compliments, but the art of saying agreeable things which mean nothing, and of lulling people into an utter insensibility of their faults? I would by no means have you rigidly severe; but I would never have you sacrifice truth to complaisance. Truth is an inexhaustible spring, from which innumerable streams are derived, whose purity may be defiled many different ways. Some depart from it by equivocation; some by mental reservations; neither of them recollecting, that to be a lover of truth is the greatest ornament of man.

SUCH language, I well know, would be incomprehensible to mere courtiers; but I hope I am not giving instructions to persons, who are ambitious of that sort of life. The principles, which I am inculcating, will never introduce you to it; if they do, my instructions must be strangely misunderstood. Nothing would affect me

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CON. XVI. more, than to know that my children  
would be mean flatterers, capable of deceiving their master, and of betraying the interests of the public. The very idea fills me with horror. No: heaven, I trust, will not suffer ambition to take such possession of your hearts, as to lead you to any unwarrantable excess. That you may never run into it, shall be my constant prayer; and your good dispositions give me cause to hope, that my wishes will be accomplished.

IF you improve in knowledge and virtue, as I hope you will, you will be sensible of the importance of keeping your word, and never contradicting your real sentiments: what is it but to act in two opposite characters, when we outwardly approve what we inwardly condemn?

IF he, who is regardless of truth, knew what he loses by his want of uprightness and integrity; he would account himself unworthy

unworthy of society. It is impossible to CON.XVI. esteem a person; no one ventures to entrust him with the most trifling secret; and even when he speaks the truth, he is not believed. Other vices may be concealed, but falsehood is almost always discovered; and oftentimes the liar is betrayed by himself.

RECEIVE instruction on this point from those old officers, whose names are an honour to their profession; and you will know how to regard truth as she deserves. It is in their school we learn, that our life itself is not too dear a price to lay down in her behalf; that esteem is the companion of integrity; and that every promise which we make, without performing it, is an instance of falsehood which deserves to be punished.

IN proportion as I enter more deeply into reflections upon death, I discover how necessary it is to regard truth. No

T 2                    person

CON. XVI. person in my situation can avoid most  
highly respecting her, and renouncing  
every species of falsehood and dissimulation.  
They may indeed be found in  
books, or in society; but in the eyes of  
those who stand on the brink of the grave,  
they are lighter than vanity itself. Such  
persons esteem nothing more than veracity.  
Adhere to it, my children, as long as you  
live, and the blessing of Heaven will rest  
upon you. Hate evil-speaking; and be  
as slow to believe, as you are backward to  
utter, any thing to another's disad-  
vantage.

TRUTH affords the greatest delight to a  
person of a liberal mind: he finds it in  
himself, and among all his friends; be-  
cause he is connected only with such, as  
are pure and upright like himself.

ALL I have to add is, that, if a single  
instance of falsehood would establish your  
fortune, you ought to prefer a life of indi-  
gence

gence before wealth so dearly purchased. CoN. XVI.  
Honour and religion unite their influence  
in recommending this love of truth: it  
may not perhaps be altogether fashionable  
to think, and act thus; but your lives  
are not to be regulated by the dictates of  
fashion.

THE exertion of my spirits, in conversing with you on these interesting topics, may perhaps hasten my death a few days: but what is such a loss to a mother, who would freely sacrifice ages for your good, if she had them in her own disposal? I know I can only remain upon earth, so long as I continue to live in your hearts; and that the way to do this, is to store them with my sentiments.

RESTRAIN your tears, I beseech you; and let me not suffer what is worse than death, by seeing you overwhelmed with excessive grief: it is enough for me to die myself, without seeing you in danger of

CON. XVI. being the victims of immoderate sorrow on  
my account. It is true you will very soon  
be orphans; but you will be the objects of  
divine protection: his Providence never  
fails to watch over those, who apply to  
him for succour, with an honest and up-  
right heart.

I have lived about nine and thirty years;  
and there have been thousands, whose lives  
would have been more useful than mine,  
that were not permitted to live near so  
long. I should have been too happy, if I  
had lived to see you settled in the world;  
and had chosen myself the parts, which  
you were destined to perform. Gracious  
Heaven! whither doth this reflection carry  
me! O! painful affection, which adds to  
the weight of my sufferings, and imbit-  
ters the dregs of the cup of death!

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CONFERENCE XVII.

On BROTHERLY LOVE.

UNDER an hourly apprehension of Con. XVII. death, I am astonished to find myself again conversing with you. Who can less reckon upon the return of to-morrow; than one, who is already reduced to a skeleton? It is the will of Heaven, that the undue attention, which I have formerly paid to this wretched body of mine, should be recompensed by my being an eye-witness of its total decay: wherever I turn my eyes, I see nothing but the sad tokens of my approaching dissolution.

THERE are however some instructions, which I yet wish to give you; and that which I intend for the present is not one of the least important. It relates to the harmony

~~CON. XVII~~  
CON. XVII harmony which ought to subsist betwixt you all; and without which, you must never expect any peace or comfort in each other. I have therefore called you all together, because the present subject of my instructions equally concerns you all: this union only can repair the loss you will sustain by the death of your parents, and it will deliver you from a thousand inconveniences and embarrassments.

ALL families go to decay, when they are distracted by law-suits; they are torn asunder, they devour each other, they mutually wish each other's ruin: where a cordial affection does not subsist, there is nothing but confusion. I have seen some great families reduced by this to indigence: a wretched self-interested spirit had sown tares in the heart of each individual belonging to them.

IT is covetousness, which embroils the nearest relations; for the sake of a little pelf,

self, men are contented to break the bonds of consanguinity and friendship: whereas the treasures of the whole universe are not worthy to be compared with the happiness of living in peace and unity. Alas! poor mortals of a day! how solicitous are they about their earthly concerns, as if they were to dwell upon the earth for ever!

WITH what deep concern should I be filled, if I foresaw that my property could possibly be the occasion of strife betwixt you! I should in that case wish, with all my heart, to have no other inheritance to leave you, but peace and virtue; but I flatter myself, *meum & tuum*, that wretched distinction which so often separates chief friends, will never be allowed to interrupt your friendship. Nothing upon earth should be permitted to violate the bond of brotherly love.

SPRUNG from the same parents, brothers.

CON. XVII Thers are naturally connected by the most intimate union from their very birth. This friendship often grows up amidst their exercises and sports; and increases, as their hearts unfold themselves, and their affections are enlarged. An husband has not always known his wife; oftentimes indeed he knows little or nothing of her, before marriage. But brothers and sisters have had the same cradle, the same examples, the same instructions, and have lived in the same way; so that they are doubly to blame, if any matter of interest is suffered to divide them. The more inducements we have to live in union, the more clearly do we demonstrate the evil disposition of our hearts, when we give the least encouragement to dissension.

IF ever you should be tempted to disagree with each other, you will do well to estimate, what it would cost you to support your animosity, thro' the forms of a tedious

dious and expensive law-suit: and I will CON.XVII  
answer for it, that you will never be in-  
duced to carry matters to this cruel extre-  
mity. Alas! the voice of consanguinity  
is not suppressed with impunity: she al-  
ways maintains her rights; and a generous  
mind can never forget them, without do-  
ing the utmost violence to itself.

I have ever observed, with the utmost  
satisfaction and delight, your affectionate  
disposition towards each other; and I am  
persuaded that the harmony, which hath  
hitherto prevailed betwixt you, has been  
as much the effect of congenial sentiments,  
as of your own good sense. I thank Hea-  
ven for it; and I earnestly beseech you to  
preserve this concord uninterrupted. Re-  
member, that if it is conducive to your  
present advantage to be united, it will not  
less contribute to your future satisfaction;  
the longer such an union continues, the  
firmer it will become, and the more sen-  
sible

CON. XVII sible you will be of the blessings which attend it.

ALAS! how many unhappy families are there, who, having broken the bonds of friendship, are restrained, by a false shame, from mutual concessions, for the sake of restoring peace! Self-interest must have a strange ascendancy over our hearts, before the early impressions of love and friendship can be thoroughly effaced, so as to cool our affections towards those whom we once cordially loved.

I declare to you, I feel in my heart so many reasons for the love of a brother, that it does not appear to me possible to entertain any sentiment like aversion towards him: if I am mistaken, I hope you will always be in the same error with myself.

O! if you once taste the pleasure of an intimate union with each other, nothing can be equal to your satisfaction: your harvests

harvests will be crowned with peace; your CON.XVII property will be in a manner common; there will be only one heart and one soul betwixt you. We despise brothers who quarrel with one another; and chicanery employs all her arts to ruin them both.

VIRTUE is only to be found in the regions of peace and love: every kingdom, divided against itself, will be brought to desolation. Rather give up a portion of your goods, than forfeit the blessings of peace: this example was set you by your father. He chose rather to recede from his just rights, than to engage in a law-suit with his near relations; such conduct is highly worthy of your imitation.

WE are all ready enough to bewail the dismal effects of those wars, which, for the sake of an accession of territories, plunge whole nations into the depths of misery and destruction. And yet for a few yards of land we persecute each other without

CON.XVII out remorse; can there be a greater inconsistency than this?

THE world abounds with persons, who, inheriting the estates of their friends, neglect to discharge the most sacred duties, in order to gratify their boundless desires. The departed friend is no sooner interred, than they seize on his effects with the utmost eagerness, and insist on the privilege of plundering his house. Could I think you capable of such rapacity, I would rather wish that you should take possession of every thing I have, while I live, than dishonour both yourselves and me by quarrels after my death. My riches are yours; and I should really be pleased to have you make an immediate division of them among yourselves: I shall want very little, for the short time I have to live.

THERE is something horrible in the love of money: it breaks the strongest ties; it is utterly regardless of the cries of the wretched;

wretched: it despises the censures of the world; it leads us into the greatest crimes. CON. XVII  
When we thirst after riches, we despise virtue as a thing of nought: even the soul itself is disregarded, when this passion is predominant; hence so many estates indirectly obtained! hence so many instances of inhumanity to the distressed!

BUT what is a palace, however brilliant; in which there is neither peace, nor virtue? It is the seat of tumult and wickedness, in the eye of reason: how much better is it to dwell in an humble cottage, and enjoy the blessings of concord and tranquility!

THE riches, which we acquire by dishonest means, are seldom of long duration. Heaven oftentimes, no doubt, as a punishment for the possessors, causeth them to pass away like a vapour: every inheritance becomes in some sort unlawful, when

CON. XVII when we only possess it by dissolving the  
ties of family affection.

I thank God, that covetousness never took possession of my heart; I always considered that vice, as the portion of a base mind. If your sentiments are not sordid, you will think the same: the love of your relations will appear in your eyes far preferable to all the treasures in the world; and you will never think yourselves truly rich, but when those who are nearest allied to you are your best friends. What a comfort is it to live in the midst of those of our own family, without discord, without mistrust; and to be able to find, within the circle of our own relations, all the assistance we stand in need of! This indeed deserves the name of true happiness.

WHAT can I do more, my dear children, to inspire you with the love of unity and peace; except it be to desire you will approach the couch, on which you see  
your

your mother almost expiring? In this very Con.XVII. room it was, that I implored the mercy of Heaven towards you, the moment you were born; that your souls might be filled with wisdom and benevolence: and hither must you direct your eyes, that you may incessantly rekindle the powerful motives, which ought to unite you to each other. Consider these walls, as ready to witness against you, if you should ever presume to violate the obligations of fraternal affection.

As for you, my beloved Daughter, I recommend you most earnestly to the kind attention of your brothers; who, I trust, will pity the dangerous situation of your tender youth, and always continue inviolably attached to you. And do you, on your part, never forget, that your happiness may greatly depend on cultivating their friendship. Reject with scorn the advice of such, as would — But I must cease; a cloud this moment over-

U                      spreads

Con. XVII spreads me, which darkens both my visual  
and intellectual sight. Adieu! — my anxiety for you will prove more fatal to me, than the disease, under which I languish : it urges me to speak, at a time when the extremity of my weakness will not suffer me to proceed : What a struggle betwixt them both !

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C O N F E R E N C E XVIII.

On RELIGION.

A DAY in my present weak state is too precious, to be passed over by me, without employing it in discoursing with you on the subject of Religion; in explaining to you what it is, and what are the demands which it makes upon you. I am thankful for that measure of divine knowlege which hath taught me, that nothing can equal the happiness of being engaged in the service of God. Be assured, you will never be happy, but while you live in obedience to His laws.

ConXVIII

ALL the instructions, which I have hitherto given you, would be very defective indeed, if they did not lead you to Christianity. An honest and an amiable man are

U 2                      only

CONXVIII only sketches of virtue; religion must fill  
up, and finish, the picture.

I will not enter upon a discussion of the several kinds of religious worship. It is sufficient to say, that we believe Christianity to be established on the foundation of reason, scripture, and truth; and that they, who have presumed to level their attacks against it, are scattered as the dust before the wind. This is a fact which history will sufficiently attest, and of the truth of which you will be thoroughly convinced, if you read it with attention: it is only the strength of our passions which blinds our sight in this matter.

I never knew a man of real virtue decry religion; men only attack its precepts and instructions, because it prescribes mortification and self-denial. The libertine condemns religion, only to revenge himself on it for the restraints which it lays upon him: he is like a man who, having been

cast

cast in a law-suit, endeavours to defend CONXVIII himself, by accusing his judges of part-  
ality and iniquity.

IF ever you listen to such people, and adopt their idle objections to the truth, you are undone: your hearts will soon be corrupted; like the heart of that fool upon sacred record, who presumed to say in it, “ There is no God.” We begin with listening to blasphemy, and we finish with uttering it ourselves.

WHEN I am tormented with frightful apprehensions on this subject, my comfort is, that you have had the blessing of a Christian education: I recall to my remembrance those holy sacraments, whereby you have been initiated and strengthened; those resolutions, by which you have so often engaged yourselves to serve your God with fidelity. All these considerations fill me with a confident assurance, that my children will continue faithful

CANXVIII members of the church in which they  
~~~~~ were born and educated; and never dis-  
honour the Religion of their Saviour by an  
immoral or irreligious conduct.

INDEED if I had any doubts in this mat-  
ter, I should weep incessantly for you;  
my soul would be cast down with the most  
horrible inquietude: and I should be ready  
to curse the very day, in which I brought  
you into the world. I should no longer be  
a mother, most tenderly attached to her  
children; but a wretched woman, that  
had given them up, to vindicate the ho-  
nour of God. Oh! how infinitely are  
both you and myself indebted to Him!  
how wonderfully doth He vouchsafe to  
comfort and support even me, who am but  
dust and ashes! How, good Heavens!  
can I sufficiently acknowlege this great  
mercy!

IT is the Christian religion alone, which  
intimately unites us with the Deity. While

we

we walk under the direction of her light, CON XVIII  
we are in no danger of losing our way; we  
find her present in all our necessities. She  
never forsakes us in any of our distresses;  
she makes us amends, for all the losses we  
sustain; she attends us, even to the grave;  
in her bosom we live, in her arms we ex-  
pire.

RELIGION sanctifies our actions; and  
furnishes the soul with infinite consolation;  
by setting before it the hope of an Ever-  
lasting Recompence. In what deep dis-  
tress should I now be involved, if, being  
about to lose you, whom I love more  
dearly than myself, I had no resource in  
the treasures of Heaven! A fatal despair  
would seize upon my soul; I should sink  
into the horrors of annihilation, and  
should expire full of rage and fury.

BUT, O my God, the confidence  
which I have, that I shall see and enjoy  
Thee, calms my grief; and assures me,

CON XVIII that in Thee I have what is much more  
precious to me than the whole universe,  
even more than my children themselves,  
though so exceedingly dear to me.

THUS it is, that our holy religion flies to our succour in the midst of evils; the more afflictive they are, the more abundant are her consolations. How happy will you be, if you observe her maxims! nothing can then render you miserable. You will perceive the hand of GOD in every occurrence of your life, however trivial in appearance: you will acknowlege his wisdom in every leaf that shooteth, in every insect that creepeth, in every grain of dust that you tread under your feet. You will know that He is the author of life and death; that He directs our thoughts, listens to our sighs, enables us to behold, and to declare the wonders of his Providence.

How many days, alas! have I passed without

without reflecting on these truths! The CONXVIII world is a stream, which always carries us away, far from GOD, and from ourselves.

IN the eyes of the man of this world, religion is a mere engine of state-policy: the profane wit treats it as a fable. But to him who listens to its dictates, and learns from it to renounce his passions, it is no other than truth itself. Consider it as your duty to become acquainted with religion; she fears nothing, except that men should be ignorant of her excellence.

IN vain hath imposture painted Christianity in the falsest colours; it cannot name a single error, which she approves; or point out a single truth, which she condemns; nor can an instance be produced of any one, who ever repented of being a Christian. Self-reproach is the portion only of those perverse men, who scoff at religion: scarce doth a fit of sickness seize them, but they smite upon their breasts

CON XVIII breasts in despair, and bewail their impiety. The moment of death is that of truth. If religion would tolerate vice, they, who are now her bitterest adversaries, would represent her as lovely and delightful, and earnestly espouse her cause.

I need not tell you, that it is not necessary to practice works of piety, in order to obtain the character of an honest man; it is sufficient for this purpose, merely to abstain from injuring your neighbour: but honesty is always in danger of being lost, when it is not supported by religion. When we do not admit into our system a Deity, who takes cognizance of our actions, and who will either reward or punish us, we live like brute creatures; we give the reins to our lusts in every action, which we hope will escape the eyes of men.

ONLY observe those unbelievers, who live without faith and hope; attend a little to their words, and actions: their system

tem of morality is abominable; and if their manners are corrupt, this is only a necessary consequence. The fear of man is not a sufficient bridle to restrain us; it may sometimes hinder evil actions, but it lays no restraint on evil desires.

IRRELIGION leads to all kinds of excess: in her estimation the most horrid crimes are softened into gallantry. And the soul itself, O! dreadful imagination! that soul, which was created in the image of God, is only a particle of matter, which death is about to annihilate! See to what height this new philosophy raises us! you cannot consider it without horror.

Is it possible, L<sup>O</sup>R<sup>D</sup>, that my mind should be filled with such exalted ideas of thy perfections, with so ardent a desire of being for ever united to thee; and that after all, my lot should be that of a crawling insect? Is it possible, that religion, the practice whereof is so holy, whose outward

CON XVIII outward appearance is so amiable, which  
has filled me with so much comfort, which  
inspires me with so much resolution, in the  
midst of my sorrows and afflictions; is it  
possible, that such a religion should be a  
mere illusion and chimæra? Away with  
such deceitful dreams! My flesh may de-  
cay, and my tomb open itself to receive  
me; but I foresee a never-ending life  
awaits me: and the GOD, whom I adore,  
will crown me with unspeakable joy, if I  
am so happy as to depart this life in his  
fear and love.

O ! my dear children, this idea already  
fills my soul with transport; methinks I  
already see time end, and Eternity —  
But suffer me, a moment, to give up my  
whole attention to this sublime subject;  
suffer me for a while to forget the world,  
and to think only of Heaven.—

HERE she continued lost for some time  
in the depth of her reflections; but after-  
wards,

wards, recovering herself, she resumed her CONXVIII,  
discourse.

NATURE has certainly made you more dear to me, than any other creature in this world: but Religion is an additional tie of affection, by which you are still more strongly united to me. When I reflect on our alliance by consanguinity, I consider you as children fashioned and formed within me, of whom death will very soon deprive me: but, by the light of faith, I behold you, as children stamped with the image of GOD himself, and destined to live with me for ever in the regions of eternal happiness.

WITHOUT such ideas as these, so capable of raising and comforting the soul, a mother knows nothing superior to that sort of fondness, which the brute creature shews towards its young: affection, which is merely earthly, is nothing more than pure instinct. Whereas religion purifies  
parental

CONXVIII parental love, and gives it a continuance which will never have an end.

LEARN hence, my dear children, that your behaviour, unless you have Heaven in your view, will be mean and unworthy. Earth has not a point, on which an immortal being can rest: whatever it has to offer, must needs perish with it; and whatsoever perisheth, is as nothing.

WHEN a soldier is thoroughly persuaded of this truth, he is a thousand times a better officer for it. He does not wait to be seen by men, in order to acquit himself with valour: he knows that he is seen of GOD, and that is sufficient for him. A true Christian is never faint-hearted, when he is doing his duty: he is persuaded that religion has placed him in his post, that she requires him to hazard his life for his King and Country, and he is prepared to obey her commands.

ALL my comfort, amidst the ravages which

which infidelity is making, is, that you <sup>CON XVIII</sup> are of such rank, as only to associate with persons of quality. Liberal minds seldom protest openly against religion : it is chiefly in the company of low persons, or those who have had no proper education, that impious conversation prevails.

GOOD GOD ! what pleasure can a Christian find, in ridiculing the sacred truths of Christianity ? What credit can he gain, in reviling the religion of his fathers ; in which he lives, and in which he expects to die ? We admire those letters, in which the Jew, the Turk, the Persian, speak of the worship of their respective deities, with transport and enthusiastic reverence. And do We ridicule a work, on the authority of which the Christian's faith stands supported ? What an inconsistency ! what monstrous absurdity !

O ! my dear children . if you could look

CONXVIII look into my soul, you would see how earnestly I desire that you should render unto GOD the things which are GOD's; that you should observe his laws, respect his ministers, and not tamely suffer wicked raillery to be levelled against any thing which relates to divine worship. The least pleasantry, upon so sacred a subject, is almost always blasphemy.

WHENEVER You approach as near to the end of your life, as I am at this time; you will, I hope, have as lively a sense of that awful Deity, whom we are too apt to forget in the days of health, and in the vigour of life: his justice on one side, and his mercy on the other, will then, I trust, engage all your thoughts, and all your admiration.

WHENEVER you can truly say you fear nothing but GOD, you will consider the approach of death, only as an entrance on a state of happiness. A life full of crimes,  
and

and even a life that has been unprofitably CONXVIII spent, is a dreadful object to the eyes of a Christian, at the point of death. But observe, that the piety, which I am at present recommending to you, is only such as is manly, rational, and solid; founded on the authority of the Gospel, and recommended and inforced by the Christian church, in every age and nation, in which Christianity is known. Superstition never yet made a good Christian. It only exposes religion to contempt, to make it consist in those frivolous ceremonies, which true piety disclaims.

O! If I had but the knowlege of those great and holy men, whose names we justly venerate: I would paint true religion to my children in colours the most lively, and represent it in terms the most endearing that can be conceived. I would shew them, that the beauteous firmament itself is but a faint image of the spiritual

X                      purity

**C**ONXVIII purity of religion; and that the soul, which it enlightens, is far superior to the material Heavens.—O thou Spirit of truth! descend into the hearts of my children; convincing them so thoroughly of the vanity of the world, that they may be attached to Thee alone! I would rather wish they should expire in my presence, than that they should ever renounce their religion. It is their happiness to be born within its influence: their ancestors were firm believers of the truths of Christianity; and with my latest breath I pray, that, above all other riches, they may possess the inestimable treasures of substantial piety.

EXCUSE, my dear children, the irregularity of this conference: my language is the effusion of a heart, which utters its sentiments in a desultory manner. The desire I have, of saying a thousand things at the same time, creates a confusion of ideas;

ideas; and this desire terminates only in CONXVIII  
weak endeavours.

INDEED I have the most dreadful conflicts within myself: my body, tho' little better than an empty shadow, swallows up my soul, and abaseth it to the earth; it gives me no other proof of its existence than my sufferings; the pains I feel have an influence on every thought and expression. But I comfort myself by reflecting, that this state is only a passage to a better; and that the hour is at hand, when my gracious God will receive me into the arms of his mercy. How dear to me is that religion, which presents such happiness to my view! What an enemy to his own peace is the man, who would discard his best friend, his supreme consolation in this world!

WHAT I have said to you on this important topic deserves to be made the subject of your most serious reflections; as well

CON XVIII because it is the language of truth itself,  
as because it is the exhortation of a dying parent. How meanly would you think of me, if I were so regardless of your *first* concern, as, in these my last moments, to exhort you to be careful only to secure the blessings of the present life! The sight of my pallid countenance, which is the very image of death, would shew you, that I should be equally weak and wicked in wishing to deceive you; and that the world, with all its charms, is in reality nothing more than a dream which deceives us, and which passes away with incredible rapidity.

A little reflection will convince you that there is nothing but God and His religion, the continuance whereof we can ensure; and that every thing has an end, except the dominion of virtue. Good Heavens! in what a situation should I find myself, if I had only reckoned upon this mortal life;

life; if all my happiness had centered Con XVIII.  
within the circle of a few years! I should  
see nothing before me but annihilation, or  
something far more terrible. But, by the  
help of religion, my mind is raised up to  
God; and from the mansions of the grave  
I perceive a light arising, diffused by the  
mercy of that God, whose goodness is  
the source of my delight. This is my  
consolation, and that of every Christian:  
this also, my dear children, will be your  
comfort, if you faithfully observe the di-  
vine commandments.

You are by no means left at liberty to  
follow the dictates of your own passions,  
or to walk in the paths of unbelief. The  
education which you have received, the ad-  
vice of your father just before his death,  
and my admonitions under the same cir-  
cumstances, make you accountable for  
your conduct to your country, and to all  
mankind. They will attentively watch

CONXVIII your behaviour; and if this should prove unworthy of the advantages, with which you have been distinguished, you will be universally despised.

THUS it is that the world itself can take its revenge of you; and, indifferent as it may appear about religion, it will always be ready to take her part against you. Every one will be ready to cry out, how is it possible that persons, so virtuously educated, should give themselves up to such licentiousness! surely their hearts must be more than ordinarily corrupt.

BUT you will not, I hope, be restrained altogether by this consideration; an earnest desire to please God, and not to degenerate from the honour of your ancestors, will, I trust, engage you to persevere in the practice of your duty.

You have too just a sense of this, to forget Him that hath made you; or to neglect to offer Him, every morning and evening

evening of your lives, the tribute of adoration and love; or to forsake the assemblies of those holy persons, who never fail to implore the assistance of Heaven. It is only by debasing ourselves to a level with the brute creation, that we lose the idea of God. How can we forget Him, in whom we live, and by whom we have our being! How can we fail to delight in the service of Him, who is the author and fountain of all our honour and happiness! How richly do they deserve the name of fools, who are regardless of the worship of God, and who affect to despise the ordinances of religion!

I am not afraid, that you will be prejudiced against the true religion, by being told, that it abounds with incomprehensible mysteries; common sense will inform any one, that an infinite Being is a fathomless abyss; and that his nature is unsearchable. But I fear lest your passions should

CONXVIII seduce you: these only can persuade you  
to believe, that Christianity is not the  
work of GOD.

BUT let us draw the veil over an event,  
the very possibility of which is so dreadful:  
I had much rather persuade myself that,  
like your forefathers, you will live in the  
fear of GOD; and that, like them, you  
will die in an humble hope of being ad-  
mitted into His blessed presence. If you  
waited only for my death, before you de-  
clared in favour of infidelity, alas! how  
little would you gain by it! Will not your  
hearts be equally open to that GOD who  
seeth you now, when I am removed out of  
your sight? It is He, and not such a poor  
worm of the earth as I am, that you  
ought to regard; that Being, who is mer-  
ciful to the good, but terrible to the un-  
godly.

O! how often hath the idea of his  
justice affrighted me! Even at this time,  
when

when I have a deep sense of His mercy impressed upon my mind, the thoughts of my dissolution, and circumstances which will attend it, make me afraid: the profusion of tears, which my friends will shed, the solemn procession, the profound respect of my attendants, all serve to fill my weakened mind with awful apprehensions. One while I see nothing but the Majesty of the living GOD, and the insignificance of the creature, which He is about to sacrifice: at another time, with most dutiful submission I await the blow, which shall reduce me to my original dust, as a tribute due to His sovereign Majesty.

How wonderful will be the instantaneous change in our ideas! How far beyond the power of reason to comprehend! It stands astonished at the view of that immensity, into which I am about to enter! Yet a moment —— and GOD alone will either fill me with His glory, or overwhelm me with

CONXVIII with the terrors of His justice. What an  
alteration! All the kings in the universe  
must experience the same fate.

IT is not the terror of the grave, nor  
the horrible corruption which this body  
of mine is about to experience, nor that  
eternal oblivion to which I shall be con-  
signed, which affrights me; but that new  
world, which I see only as through a glass  
darkly, and of which we only know in  
part, even when we are dying; that  
strange land, to which all generations are  
destined to go, and from which no one is  
permitted to return.

THIS, my dear children, is the object  
which ought to engage your principal at-  
tention, and not altogether the renown  
which you may acquire in arms, or the  
rank to which you may be advanced at  
court.

As for your mother, while you are all  
of you deeply engaged in the tumult of  
worldly

worldly affairs, she perhaps — but why, CON XVIII  
gracious SAVIOUR ! should I disquiet my-  
self with uncertainty ? I cannot be igno-  
rant that Thy mercies are infinite ; and  
that Heaven is open for the admission of all,  
who sincerely love and trust in Thee.

O ! my children, the dearest objects of  
my affection ! it is to GOD himself that I  
recommend you : His Providence will  
guard your youth : it extends itself even  
to the most inconsiderable part of the  
creation. His love towards you will sup-  
ply the loss of your relations, which are  
now no more. No one can be so much  
your father, as He is ; you will find Him  
to be such, while you live ; you will also  
experience His mercy in the hour of death.  
He is every where present ; and on all oc-  
casions : yet will He be no longer your's,  
but reject you for ever, if you forsake  
Him.

## CONFERENCE XIX.

*On the VANITY of the WORLD.*

CON. XIX. FOR three weeks our exemplary mother had found herself somewhat better: at the end of which her appetite failed her, all at once; this, together with her loss of sleep, reduced her to the lowest state of weakness imaginable. Yet she wished to have one other opportunity of conversing with her children; tho' the instructions which she had already given them were so full, as to leave hardly any thing, that was necessary, unsaid.

THE extreme weakness of my present state, says she, affords me an occasion of speaking to you on the vanity of all things in this world. Look at me with attention: see how dim my eyes appear; how emaciated

emaciated my person ; and what possession  
death has already taken of me. This was  
the woman, that appeared not long ago  
with such eclat; that was celebrated for  
her amiable qualities, as well as for her  
external accomplishments. Here are the  
only remains of what she was; a mere  
shadow---a nothing.

THIS situation has rendered me much  
more of a philosopher, than all the books  
that were ever written on the subject could  
have done. Alas! whilst I suffer, and  
even am dying by degrees, I have seen all  
those objects gradually lose their value,  
which my imagination raised far above  
their real worth. Pleasures now appear to  
me only as mere illusions, and honours as  
an empty vapour. Truth seems every day  
to take me by the hand, and shew me the  
vanity of this world, and the emptiness  
of every thing which it possesseth.

THE

CON. XIX. THE same effect is produced in me, which the autumn every year exhibits to our view: just as we then see the beauties of nature gradually disappear, I have seen the grandeur of this world diminished; its most valuable possessions debased, and all its ornaments stript off, as leaves from the trees by the winter's blast.

FALSE appearances dazzle our eyes, while we enjoy perfect health; every thing then bewitches us; every thing seduces us; every thing appears to us eternal in its duration. Scarcely hath a fit of sickness seized us, but truth dispels the charm, and recalls us to ourselves; leaving us to behold nothing but a veil of darkness, drawn over all that heretofore excited our admiration.

IN proportion as I draw nearer to my grave, the horizon grows darker; and those entertainments, which once enchanted me, those balls which charmed me,

me, those assemblies which intoxicated my CON. XIX.  
mind and my senses, seem only phantoms,  
of which I have been the dupe, which, on  
a moment's reflection, disappear.

IT is wonderful to observe, what an indifference for life a tedious illness gives us: how it detaches us from those false pleasures, which have no other reality in them, than the remorse and weariness which they occasion. Providence almost always interposes itself to undeceive us; and to convince us, that in Him alone all our admiration, and all our researches, ought to center.

COULD you have thought, my dear children, that I should, in the space of a few months, become an object so different from myself; an emblem of all human miseries, and even a frightful spectre! Perhaps, indeed, you have not courage enough to behold me: at least, look beyond those shadows of death, which surround

CON.XIX. round me. Dwell not on those melancholy objects, which offend the sight; but amidst those sad ruins, which my body has undergone, separate that heart which is still entire, and loves you with inexpressible tenderness; that alone has not yet felt the ravages of death. But alas! like the wretched skeleton that surrounds it, that also must soon return to the dust, from which it was originally formed.

IT will only be my immortal spirit, of which we are regardless amidst the bustle of the world, that will constitute the whole of my existence, 'till the time, when my body shall be reanimated. Alas! the only part of me, which hath any stability or duration, is that, which I so long suffered to be utterly forgotten: and all those flattering objects, which heretofore soothed my vanity, are now departed as a dream.

WHAT folly is it, my children, to be so strongly attached to objects of such a transitory

Fitory nature ! to put one's confidence in CON. XIX.  
things, which have only the appearance of  
good ! Alas ! if all the most captivating  
scenes in the world could be now exhibited  
to my view ; had I now the disposal of  
crowns and treasures, what advantage  
could I receive from them ? Could they  
one moment arrest the hand of death ?  
Could they give the smallest degree of  
strength to my body, or beauty to my per-  
son ? And, even if they were capable of  
producing such wonders, would they be  
of any continuance ? Every thing here  
below, even life itself, is but a dream.  
How many great men have you seen pass  
away ! Tho' their glory appeared im-  
mortal ; we now scarcely remember, that  
they ever existed. Death hath destroyed  
not only their bodies, but the very name  
and the remembrance of them.

O ! how low doth human greatness sink ;  
when the curtain is drawn up, and we see

Y

only

CON. XIX. only the Majesty of GOD ! It is nothing  
more than an imperceptible point, lost in  
the abyf of immensity.

I have lived in the society of persons,  
among whom my fortune, rank, and digni-  
tity attracted many admirers ; when the  
vivacity of pleasure intoxicated my heart,  
and charmed my sences : but all that glory  
is departed as a shadow, and the societies  
themselves are sunk into nothing. A few  
years have effected this strange revolution :  
time is a relentless destroyer, daily consum-  
ing every thing that is mortal, and by de-  
grees annihilating itself.

O Heavens ! what a vacancy appears  
before my eyes ; when I review the num-  
ber of persons within the circle of my  
own acquaintance, who are now no more :  
enough almost to form a world ! You will  
very soon add me to the number : my slen-  
der voice, my emaciated figure, my ex-  
hausted frame, all unitedly declare, that I  
have

have nothing to expect within the compass  
of the universe, but five or six feet of earth.

CON.XIX.

THE same lot awaits you all, at some little distance of time. Your youth will pass away like a rose ; and, for ought we know, you are this very moment on the brink of destruction. The grave receives as many young persons, as old : every creature is tributary to death ; he is an unrelenting creditor, who suffers no one to be at rest.

How strangely should I have been deceived, if I had reckoned upon threescore or fourscore years ! By the blast of the Almighty the bloom of my life is faded away ; and I am brought to contemplate my death, in a state of extreme weakness : and ought I to complain of this state ? I, who, like other human creatures, was born to die ; and whose dissipation and folly have deserved a large portion of the cup of bitterness and sorrow.

Y 2

IT

CON. XIX. IT is only by the tenderness of my affection, that you can know me to be your mother. Sickness has so entirely effaced every line of my person, as to render me quite a stranger to my own family, and to all my attendants : they look shy upon me ; they are afraid to come near me ; and it is only their exceeding great affection for me, that gets the better of their unwillingness to approach me. I am very far from blaming them ; for I hardly even remember myself.

IT is only this perspective, that discovers truth to us : while we see nothing but the gaudy splendor of the world, we live in the midst of error and delusion. But as soon as we reflect upon our frailty, we turn towards ourselves, and towards Heaven ; we penetrate even into the reality of things, and do not suffer ourselves to be dazzled by appearances.

How thankful ought I to be, that death approaches

approaches me so gradually, as insensibly to CON. XIX. reconcile me to it, and withdraw my attention from every seducing object! I pass my days in reflecting on the sources of my life, which are exhausted; in reading those books, which remind me of my latter end: for it is right that you should know, that I never spare myself on this subject. Every morning I take my looking glass, to see to what state death reduces us; and often, very often I am reminded, that my coffin is just ready to receive me.

THERE it is, my children, that very soon your fond mother, without either sense or motion, and without any prospect of returning to this world again, will be destined to moulder in the bosom of corruption. O! fearful thought!---But I will spare your tenderness on a subject too affecting for you, as well as for myself. You are not ignorant, (indeed who is?) that this dismal end is the lot of all men;

CON. XIX. and that in spite of the pleasures, which delude them, in spite of the false glory which dazzles them, they must fall into the depths of horror and oblivion.

DREADFUL as the darkness of the tomb may appear, it has enlightened me more than the brightness of the sun : this only shews me perishable objects ; that discovers to me the excellence of my spiritual part, and the Majesty of my GOD, which before were in a manner concealed from me. By the help of the light which that imparts to me, I have gone through the whole world, and have discovered much vanity and misery ; I have seen nothing more effectually instructive than death and dying persons, burials, and epitaphs.

SEE all that remains to me of earthly greatness : a short inscription serves to inform, that we once lived, and are now no more ; and even this is effaced by length of time. The marble itself decays ;

cays ; and the eternity of the Supreme CON. XIX.  
Being triumphs over the nothingness of man.

I have said enough I hope, my dear children, to convince you, that I do not wish for inscriptions, or magnificent titles on my tomb : I am nothing more than dust ; and to the same element am I returning, from which I was formed. And can dry bones reduced to dust, and moulder ing in corruption, deserve a panegyric ? O ! where shall we set bounds to our vanity, if it does not sink into nothing at the very sight of a grave !

I think you must have opportunities enough of discovering, that I am too thoroughly sensible of the vanity of the world, to wish to survive myself, in wretched praises inscribed on my monument : rather let me atone for my errors and my follies by an eternal oblivion. Heaven would arm itself against me, if

Y 4.           I thought.

CON. XIX. I thought of decorating a miserable sepulchre ; it would only serve to perpetuate my pride beyond the limits of this present life, if I should attempt, by improper ornaments, to alter the very nature of that, which in itself is nothing but misery and corruption.

ALL that I require of you, my beloved friends, is to come sometimes to the place of my interment ; not merely to shed a few tears over my cold and senseless ashes, but to recall to your minds the instructions which I have given you. That aweful solemnity, that mournful silence, which prevails in the neighbourhood of sepulchres, will give you leisure and inclination to meditate seriously on all that I have said to you. The representation of death is the best school, wherein we can learn to live as we ought ; to raise the soul from earthly things, and to fix it upon GOD.

PROMISE

PROMISE me, that you will sometimes CON. XIX.  
visit that instructive spot; I invite you  
thither. And if you love me well enough  
to have your minds properly stored with  
the precepts which I have delivered to  
you, you will consider me as actually  
present with you there; I shall have no  
other method of appearing to you, or con-  
versing with you.

ALAS! my poor children, what a me-  
lancholy task am I imposing on you! if  
the world knew it, it would be silly  
enough to treat it with contempt: but  
my affection prompts me to communicate  
to you this useful and important secret.  
Leave the world to act for itself; and ne-  
ver listen to it in any matter, which con-  
cerns your duty. It is fond of nothing;  
which does not contribute to its amuse-  
ment; and esteems nothing, but what  
flatters its taste for vanity and pleasure.

WHAT an impassable gulph is about  
to

CON. XIX. to interpose itself betwixt the world and  
me! Yet a little while, and I shall nei-  
ther know what scenes of entertainment  
are exhibited; nor what revolutions take  
place in it: yet a very little while, and  
all ideas of the succession of months and  
years will be utterly lost. But that which  
gives me some concern is, that this spot  
of earth, on which you remain, will be  
lost in that immensity which awaits me;  
so that I shall be totally unacquainted  
with your conduct or your destination.  
What a change must be wrought in my  
existence! What a revolution in my sen-  
timents! Is it possible to conceive, that  
an instant should produce such astonishing  
effects? At present I cannot properly be  
said to belong either to this world, or the  
other: I am like a traveller divided be-  
tween two different ways; and death, in  
the twinkling of an eye, will put an end  
to my uncertainty. One while I feel my-

self

self reluctant; at another time I desire the Con. XIX.  
stroke: strange alternative! on one side,  
is the prospect of supreme felicity; on the  
other, the pain of being separated from  
that which is most dear to me.

I doubt not, my children, but my love  
for you will be considered as romantic;  
and indeed, I believe it rises to an un-  
common height. But this at least I am  
sure of, that I am not mistaken in the ad-  
vice, which I have given you: it is the  
language of truth; it is the voice of a  
dying friend, which you have heard.

We are continually running with ea-  
gerness to a new tragedy: we are filled  
with the sad scenes which it presents; and  
we find a degree of pleasure, even in the  
tears which it excites. Here, my chil-  
dren, is a scene yet more affecting: we  
have no recourse to fiction here: the chief  
character in this tragedy is a mother real-  
ly expiring; the sentence is pronounced,  
and

CON. XIX. and is on the very point of being executed.

I have for some days felt myself more weak than usual, and find that my life is now making its escape from this tottering frame; nothing indeed supports me but my tenderness for you: hitherto it has detained my fugitive spirit, but at length it will be forced to yield.

COME hither, that I may embrace you; if you have the courage to join your lips to an expiring body, and to bathe in a flood of tears. Alas! I have nothing but tears to give you; the weakness of my body, and the strength which yet remains, destroy my powers of utterance.

How sad the separation! What a mournful farewell! The tenderness of my affection reminds me of the hour, in which I brought you into the world: but there is this sad difference; that I this day behold you, to see you no more.

Support

Support me, gracious Father, in this Con.XIX.  
dreadful trial: suffer me not to sink under the burthen of maternal tenderness.

I know, that I ought to forget every thing for thy sake: and yet my heart never ceases to think of my children. Dear as they are to me, efface them for ever from my memory; if this love either is, or will be imputed to me as a fault.

BUT, what am I saying? Good God! thou knowest, that I only love them for thy sake; and that I wish them no other happiness, than that which arises from obedience to thy law. My only reason for wishing to live among them a few years, had it been thy gracious will, is to establish in them the love of that which is good: this it is, which makes my separation from my children a thousand times more painful, than the approaching separation of my soul from my body.

See!

CON. XIX. See! there they are! Yet do I see, and  
hear them! Yet are they —

BUT what pain and distraction is this, which seizes me! the pleasure I now have in them is but a momentary gratification; yet a little while, and there will not be a person upon earth, who will love them with a thousandth part of the tenderness with which their mother loves them. O! how I am lost in the depth of such reflections!

CON-

## CONFERENCE XX.

*On RELATIVE DUTIES.*

OUR excellent mother, having received a visit from her brother-in-law, and having conversed with him for half an hour, desired he would permit her to introduce her children to him: when, in the language of the tenderest affection, she thus addressed them.

THIS, my dear children, is the person, whom henceforth you are to consider as your parent: as you are connected with him by the ties of consanguinity, I beseech you to attach yourselves to him by the obligations of inviolable friendship. The love you have for me, which is about to expire, when I shall no longer exist in this world, ought to be transferred to your uncle:

CON. XIX. uncle: to his favour I recommend you;   
no one can give you better advice than he can.

THEN turning herself towards her brother, she addressed him thus: O my dear brother, you who continually remind me of my excellent husband, and in whom I have always found such sentiments as one so nearly related to him may easily be supposed to entertain, have pity on these children. Pity their tender age; pity their orphan-state, when I shall be taken from them. My days are ended; my life is but a blast; and nothing remains to me, but the regret of having wretchedly mispent it.

O! that I could now be assured by you that my wishes would be accomplished: what would become of these unhappy creatures in the midst of a most dangerous world, if they were not blest with your friendship! In them, my dear brother, recollect, both their father, whom you affectionately

fectionately loved, and their mother, who CON. XX.  
has no power of utterance beyond sighs and  
tears.

My heart is inexpressibly affected at this dreadful separation ; — a separation, as it were, from myself : — more terrible than the horrors of the grave.

FORGIVE me, gracious Lord ! Thou knowest, that even in my dreams, — in the most solemn acts of devotion, — in the prayers addressed to thy Heavenly Majesty, — the remembrance of my family continually interposed itself to distract my mind. In vain have I wished to have my whole attention fixed upon Thee : in vain have I endeavoured to become wholly absorbed by the contemplation of Thine infinite perfections. My thoughts perpetually recur to those objects of my love, which Thou hast given me, and from whom I am now to suffer an eternal separation.

Z

ALAS !

CON. XX. ALAS! my dear children, I feel that I have much less fortitude than I appear to have: one moment's reflection on your sad condition, one single thought on the subject of our separation, overwhelms my soul with the deepest sorrow. O Heaven! my mind hath but too much sensibility at present: e're long, no visible object will affect it. These, my dear children, are the last struggles of my affection: my heart at this moment seems to collect every thing that is most tender and affectionate, in order to bid you an everlasting farewell.

AT these words she melted into tears, when her brother-in-law answered;

“ No, my sister, God will not be offended with that tenderness, for which you blame yourself: He is goodness itself; and the Holy Scriptures dwell particularly on the subject of his love. If your affection for your children were merely carnal and earthly, the case were different; but your  
love

Love for them is that of a Christian parent, CON. XX.  
who is chiefly solicitous for their eternal  
salvation.

"MAKE yourself as easy as possible on  
their account; you entrust them to my  
care, and I will not be regardless of their  
welfare. I shall consider them as my own  
children; in me they shall at once experi-  
ence the authority of a father, and the af-  
fection of a mother: and I verily believe  
we shall none of us forget the confidence  
you repose in us. Comfort yourself,  
therefore, with reflecting, that you leave  
us only preparing ourselves to follow you;  
since this life, however long it may be ac-  
counted, is in reality no more than a state  
of momentary existence."

## CONFERENCE XXI.

## On KINDNESS to DOMESTICS.

CON. XXI.

THOUGH our exemplary mother appeared to have exhausted her whole power of utterance in these admonitions to her children ; yet one subject remained, arising from the care she took to recommend to their kindness her family and dependents.

When they were all together, she said to her sons, in a voice that could with difficulty be heard : “ I charge you to be kind to these my domestics, who have always been strongly attached to me. Some of them served your father, and others have given me every proof of the most dutiful regard. I have not forgotten them in my will ; but that is not sufficient. They have

have a demand on you for kindnesses, as CON. XXL  
friends in distress; for it is in this point  
of view, that I would have you consider  
them: they are sprung from the same  
origin, and are destined to the same end  
with ourselves.

O! how unreasonable is that pride,  
which the world affects; and which makes  
us look down with contempt on persons,  
in every essential respect, like ourselves!

NEVER forget, that we dishonour and  
debase human nature, whenever we treat  
any person with disdain, merely because  
his external appearance is meaner than our  
own. Your names, when you were bap-  
tized, were entered in the same register  
with those of the poorest; and the dust,  
to which you will one day be reduced, may  
assure you that the same destiny of morta-  
lity awaits us all.

AM I not going to be mixed with the  
lowest and meanest of my fellow-creatures?

Shall

CON. XXI. Shall I not be reduced to a level with the  
humblest slave? Thus doth death cast down  
the high looks of the proud.

You will indeed act agreeably to my  
wishes, when you treat your domestics  
with kindness; when you watch over their  
morals, and take care of their health.  
God knows that even at the time, when  
pride and a love of the world fed my va-  
nity, I was never altogether unmindful of  
them; nor ever spoke to them in a  
haughty stile: if I ever did, here they are,  
let them witness against me."

To these words her domestics could only  
reply with sighs and lamentations; and  
her children, overwhelmed with grief,  
with interrupted accents, said:

" O! that your days could be pro-  
longed, in proportion to the ardency of  
our desires! You should acknowlege, in  
our sentiments, a perfect copy of your  
own. You should then see and know,

that

that nothing can ever remove from our CON. XXI.  
hearts the love with which they are filled  
towards you, or the maxims with which  
you have so richly stored our minds.

"OUR life will from this time be a  
life of bitterness and sorrow; the blow,  
with which we are about to be overwhelm-  
ed, threatens us—O! Heavens!—  
spare."

LET us, my dear children, for the  
last time, mix our tears together. The  
moment approaches, when, insensible to  
your cries, I shall no longer behold this  
earth, or be interested in what is passing  
on it: I shall not even have the conso-  
lation of feeling that tender anxiety, that  
pleasing pain, which I now suffer on  
your account.

YOUR uncle will communicate to you  
the contents of my will. I have too good  
an opinion of you, to think you will dis-  
approve of the legacies, which I have be-  
queathed

CON. XXI. queathed to the poor, and to some persons, with whose merit I am well acquainted."

A few days after this last interview, her disorder made such a progress, that, being at the very point of death, she received a visit from her children; who, with the tenderest effusions of grief, requested her last blessing.

THEN, just opening her dying lips, she with the utmost difficulty said :

THE hand of death is upon me, your mother is no more. May the Lord receive you under his protection! With my last breath I earnestly beseech him to *pardon me*, and to *bless you*. You now see little more of me than a particle of dust, about to be re-committed to the earth! Such is the end of human greatness : adieu ! my dear, my affectionate children, adieu for ever !

MY

"**M**y grave is opening—eternity commences—Gracious Lord, receive my spirit!"

CON. XXI.

HER eyes still looked for her children, 'till she expired.—Thus died this incomparable mother, the remembrance of whom religion will long preserve.

HER daughter survived her only a few days. But her sons, not regardless of the instructions which they had received, did honour to the memory of their parents, by lives worthy of their birth and their education.

*F I N I S.*